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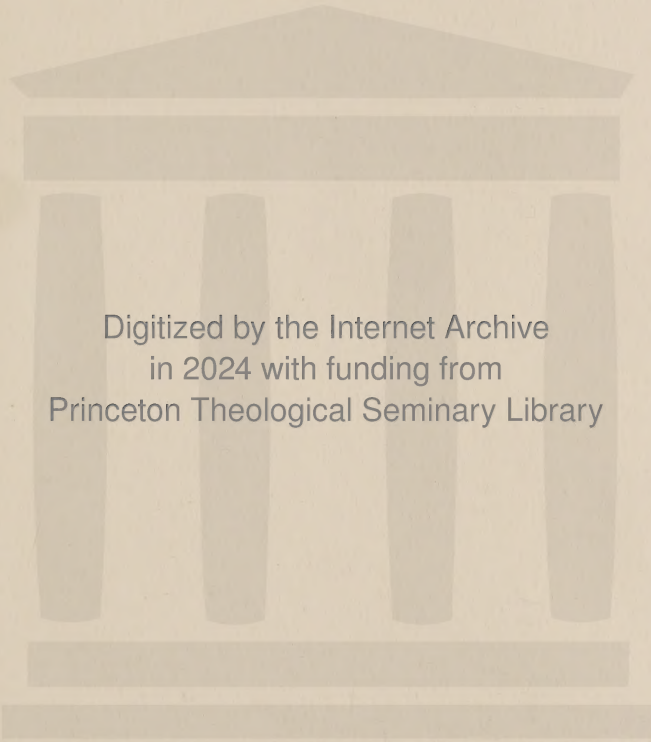
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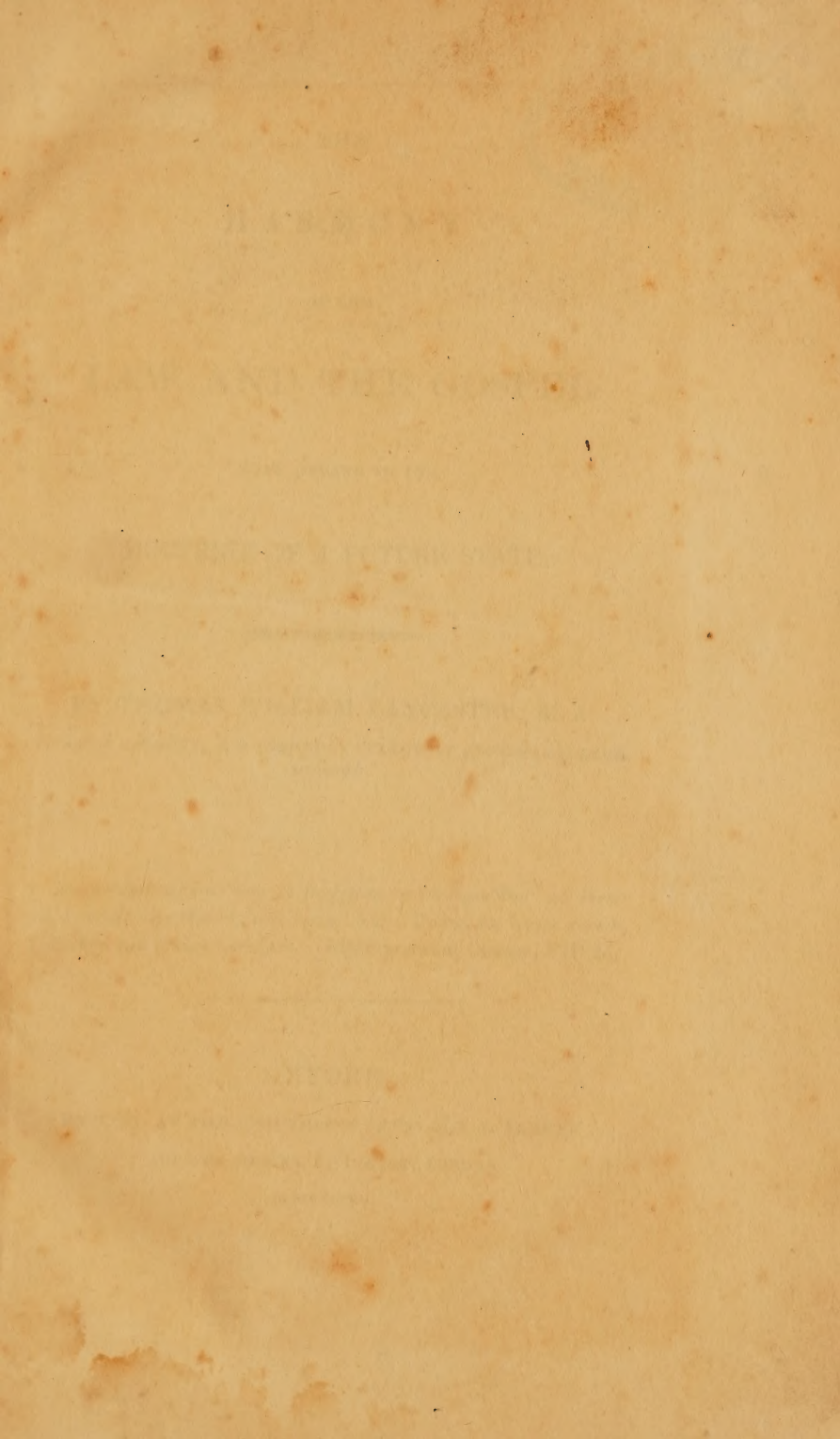
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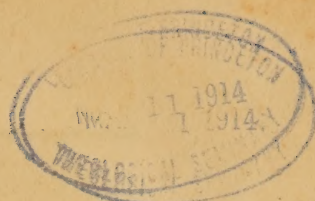
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The harmony of the law and the
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THE
HARMONY
OF THE
LAW AND THE GOSPEL
WITH REGARD TO THE
DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE.

BY THOMAS WILLIAM LANCASTER, M. A.
VICAR OF BANBURY, AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

Οὐκ αντιδιατάσσεται Θεοῦ το εὐαγγέλιον τῷ του νομοῦ Θεοῦ· οὐδ' ὁποτε-
ρος ψευδεται, οὔτε Μωϋσης, οὔτε Ἰησοῦς· οὔτε ὁ Πατήρ, τὸν Ἰησοῦν πεμπῶν,
ἐπελαθετο τινα Μωϋσῃ διατάξαιτο. Origenes contra Celsum, VII. 25.

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MDCCCXXV.

THE

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BY THOMAS WILLIAM LAMBERT, M.A.

OXFORD

P R E F A C E.

THAT future rewards and punishments do not form the subject of direct and explicit revelation in the books of Moses, is a position which, in the following treatise, I have regarded as incapable of reasonable dispute. To provide and vindicate, on scriptural grounds, the only just explanation of the fact thus stated, was the primary design of the writer. In the prosecution of this object, I have used my endeavours to prove, agreeably to my own conviction, that a deviation, as to this particular, from the present structure of the Mosaic writings, would have involved, an inconsistency with the purposes which were severally contemplated in the promulgation both of the Law and of the Gospel; a contradiction of the principles on which the Divine Author of revelation has framed his provisions for the restoration of his fallen creatures; and a tendency to counteract, by its natural influence on the human mind, the operation of that plan by which our redemption has been accomplished.

The fate of controverted subjects has com-

monly been similar to that of a disputed territory: which, when it becomes the seat of war, sustains considerable mischief from both the belligerent powers who contend for its occupation, though perhaps each of those powers professes at the same time an anxious concern for its welfare. Of the evils accruing from polemical discussion, the theme of our present inquiry has experienced its full share, in that complicated embarrassment which has accrued to it, both from misrepresentation of fact and fallacy of reasoning. With a view to disentangle my subject from these causes of delusion and perplexity, I have endeavoured to ascertain, and to establish by proof, the true state of the case which it presents to our consideration. The result of this endeavour has been alike contrary to the opinions, both of those who maintain that the doctrine of eternal life was declared in the Law; and of those who maintain that the people, to whom the Law was given, were for a long tract of ages wholly unacquainted with it. If a just exposition of reality and fact has thus been made out, there has been provided, at the same time, a confutation of those erroneous consequences which have been deduced from a misconception of the truth. But as errors, in relation to this subject, have not only been erected on a false supposition of

fact, but also constructed in the way of deduction from principles which are in themselves unobjectionable; I have felt that my attention was due to the examination of these also. Thus I have taken occasion to expose the vanity and inconsideration of the following reasonings. First, of those who allege the omission of the Law as a circumstance unworthy of the Divine perfections. Secondly, of those who urge the difference between the Law and the Gospel as an evidence of inconsistency and change. Thirdly, of those who insist on the late discovery of evangelical truths as evincing, in a manner unworthy of supreme wisdom and benevolence, a want of promptitude in framing those provisions which were requisite for the welfare of mankind.

I did not however conceive that the claims of my subject would be fully satisfied by a regard to those objects only which have now been stated. For it appeared to me, that a just view of this much contested question was not only adequate to supply the means of detecting errors and repelling objections; but that it was also in itself fruitful of such considerations as are adapted to display, in a conspicuous light, some of those discriminating lineaments of Divine beauty and truth which belong to the scheme of revelation. I have therefore been particularly anxious to bring

out to view those arguments which, being framed on principles established in the course of the previous examination, were suitable to be employed as positive evidence in support of revealed religion.

It is natural that frequent reference should occur, in a disquisition of this nature, to the celebrated work of bishop Warburton. In relation to this subject, there is a circumstance which I deem too important to be passed over without remark.

It is well known that the celebrated treatise on the Divine Legation of Moses was never completed according to the plan of its very learned and distinguished writer. Among the parts which are wanting to fill up the author's design, is one, in which he had intended to treat of the reasons why a future state was not revealed in the Law of Moses. This will appear from a passage, in which, after stating the objection of an adversary thus, "If a future state was not improper, much more if it was of use, under an extraordinary dispensation, how came Moses not to give it?" he subjoins, "I reply, for great and wise ends of Providence vastly countervailing the use of that doctrine, which, in the last volume of this work, will be explained at large^a."

^a Div. Leg. book v. Appendix, vol. v. p. 215. ed. 1811.

Had the purpose of the great writer, as thus stated, been carried into effect, there cannot be a doubt that he would have laid the greatest stress on the principle which I have myself insisted upon as chiefly available towards the solution of the question. For, in the posthumous fragment which had been intended to form a part of the ninth book, we find the following hint respecting the line of argument which he had purposed to follow.

“ And here it will be proper to observe,
“ that had Jesus been only a messenger sent
“ from heaven, with no other purpose than to
“ propagate a system of revealed morals, or to
“ republish the law of nature, we can see no
“ reason why life and immortality might not
“ have been promulged by Moses for the
“ sanction of the Law, as well as by Jesus
“ Christ, who hath made it the peculiar sanc-
“ tion of the Gospel: and so both doctrines,
“ that of the true God, and of eternal life,
“ have come from heaven together. The So-
“ cinians, and they who deny a redemption
“ by the atonement of a real sacrifice on the
“ cross, would do well to reconsider this mat-
“ ter. But more of it in a fitter place^b.”

But the passage in which his views on this

^b Book ix. chap. 1. vol. vi. pp. 265, 266.

subject are most fully disclosed, is the following.

“ Revelation teacheth that mankind lost
“ the free gift of immortal life by the trans-
“ gression of Adam ; and, from thence, became
“ mortal, and their existence confined to this
“ life. Revelation likewise teacheth that the
“ mean which Divine Wisdom thought fit to
“ employ in restoring man from death to his
“ first state of immortality, was *the sacrifice of*
“ *Christ on the cross*. Hence it appears to be
“ a thing impossible, that any messenger from
“ God, any agent or instrument made use of
“ for conducting this grand dispensation to-
“ wards its completion, could (were it in his
“ *choice* or in his *office* to promulgate the doc-
“ trine of a future state) speak of any other
“ but that purchased by Christ, and promul-
“ ged and proclaimed in the Gospel, since in
“ fact, on the principles of revelation, there is
“ no other ; and to inculcate another, would
“ be impeaching the veracity of God, and the
“ eternal stability of his councils.”

“ To conclude, There is one thing which
“ plainly evinceth, that if the Jews had the
“ knowledge or belief of a future state of re-
“ ward and punishment, they must have had
“ the knowledge of the redemption of man
“ by the death and suffering of Jesus Christ,
“ likewise. And it is this, That all the sa-

“crifices in the Jewish ritual regarded only
 “temporal things. A very competent judge
 “in these matters assures us,—*Universa Ju-*
 “*daeorum simul congesta sacrificia ad asse-*
 “*quenda hujus vitæ commoda omnia facta*
 “*erant*^c. The consequence is this, That if
 “the Jewish religion taught its followers a
 “future state of rewards and punishments, it
 “either afforded them no means of attaining
 “future happiness, or it instructed them in
 “the doctrine of the Redemption. To say
 “the first, contradicts the nature of all reli-
 “gion; to say the latter, makes the Jewish
 “useless, and the Christian false, as contra-
 “dicting its repeated declarations, that life
 “and immortality, or the doctrine of the Re-
 “demption, was brought to light through the
 “Gospel^d.”

It is far from my intention to express an unqualified concurrence of judgment in relation to the contents of the foregoing citations. On the contrary, the reasoning pursued in the last of them appears to me to labour under a considerable fallacy. For it is here contended, that the doctrine of a future state must have been unknown to the Israelites, because the doctrine of redemption was: a fact which we conceive to be too hastily assumed. That the *mode* of our redemption by

^c “*Outram de Sacr.* p. 305.”

^d *Div. Leg.* b. v. §. 6. vol. v. pp. 195, 196..

the sacrifice of the Son of God was unknown to them, may reasonably be admitted : but it cannot with equal reason be supposed, that they were ignorant of the fact, that God had decreed to provide a redemption, which was to take effect in the fulness of time. For such ignorance was inconsistent with the discovery of the Mosaic record respecting the promise of a future triumph over the seducer of man's innocence. It was equally inconsistent with the expectation they were taught to cherish, of a blessing on the whole race of mankind to arise from the seed of Abraham : for how could they, who now lay under the malediction of death, be viewed as the subjects of a Divine blessing, unless there were expected a reversal, or at least a mitigation, of the previous sentence? Our own views have therefore led us to maintain, that the doctrine of Redemption was known to the ancient church of Israel ; and that the doctrine of a future life would be a natural and necessary deduction from it.

With regard to another position contained in the last of the foregoing extracts, which relates to the Jewish sacrifices, I have so fully explained my views in the course of my work, that a brief remark will suffice for the present purpose. It is said, " That all the sacrifices " in the Jewish ritual regarded only temporal things." This is true of the Levitical

sacrifices, considered as such in their peculiar and distinctive character. But it is to be remembered, that this peculiar and distinctive character of sacrifice, as it occurs in the Mosaic ritual, was superadded to, but not destructive of, that character which belonged to it as an ordinance generally observed among mankind antecedently to the promulgation of the Law. When remodelled in the Mosaic Law, it would still retain that anterior and more prevailing character, in which we regard it as a general means of propitiating the Deity, without any restricted application to the blessings of the present life. While we conceive this to be the true statement of the case, we also conceive that it involves in it no dissonance from the language of the learned and excellent writer whose authority is here alleged by Warburton: since the design of that writer, in his work upon sacrifice, was limited to an examination of the Levitical sacrifices as viewed in relation to the sacrifice of Christ, and did not embrace a regard to the same ordinance as it prevailed in times and countries to which the temporal sanction of the Mosaic Law was unknown.

The purpose of the foregoing citations was to shew, that so far as, in relation to the omission of the Law, the present writer concurs with the sentiments of Warburton, he has also the concurrence of that distinguished

prelate as to the principle on which the omission is chiefly to be explained. Of this concurrence he was wholly unconscious when he framed his own view of the subject; since that view had been formed, and the statement of it prepared for publication in its present form, with no other knowledge of the learned writer's opinions, than what had been derived from an early edition of the *Divine Legation*, in which none of the above-cited passages will be found.

A coincidence of judgment with a writer so highly gifted as to genius and learning, may reasonably be allowed to strengthen an author's conviction on the subject to which it relates. In relation to that same subject, the views which I have taken up, derive, as I cannot but think, the strongest confirmation from another circumstance, which I will now submit to the reader's attention.

The course of argument which I have pursued in the earlier part of my work, has been designed to prove, that a premature employment, in the Law of Moses, of the sanction derived from a future life, would have been hostile to the acknowledgment of our Redeemer and the reception of his doctrines. This reasoning I have, by the matter adduced in the *Supplementary Remarks*, been able to fortify by the evidence of facts. From an examination of that evidence it will appear,

that the errors which I have described as so many corollaries deducible from the doctrine of a future state in the Law, are the very authentic doctrines entertained by the unbelieving Jews; that they are entertained in conjunction with a firm belief, that a future state was promulgated by Moses as the sanction of the Law; and that they also constitute the grounds on which that nation refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Gospel. These doctrines are indeed nothing more than so many inferences correctly deduced from a false assumption of fact: a case in which correctness of reasoning can lead only to a wider department from the object pursued, since it precludes the only chance, which fallacy would otherwise have afforded, of blundering upon truth. It will also be seen from the same evidence, that while the written Law is insisted upon as declaring the sanction of future rewards and punishments: the general reasoning in the application of the texts which have been adduced from it as declaratory of that sanction, is such as to shew, that those texts are of no avail to the purpose till they have, if I may so speak, changed their sensible qualities in a passage through the alembick of cabalistical or rabbinical interpretation.

The tenor of the foregoing remarks will naturally lead the reader to expect, in the

course of this work, a considerable difference of judgment from preceding writers, many of them of eminent name, who have pursued the same objects of inquiry. In the statement and vindication of these differences, I hope I shall not be found to have violated the moderation of a Christian temper. While illustrating also the defects inherent in the systems of foregoing writers, I trust it will not be thought that I have been insensible of the prospect, that many and considerable blemishes will be discovered in my own work. But in relation to such blemishes, I cannot but derive satisfaction from the following reflection. If my reasonings be objected to, they are at least those which have convinced my own mind: if my allegation of facts should in any case prove to be erroneous, the mistake has not arisen from any wilful neglect as to diligence of inquiry or fidelity of statement. And, if any thing shall be found in my work, which may harbour a tendency in the slightest degree injurious to the sacred cause of pure religion, I trust that no man will rejoice more sincerely than myself in any endeavour which may be employed, or any event which may operate, to detect the error, and obstruct its propagation.

Jan. 24, 1825.

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 ERRATA.

- Page 239, line 18. Before "the old sacrificial system" insert "the offerings of"
- Page 243, line 15. For "that" read "the"
- Page 269, line 12. For "incontestibly" read "incontestably"
- Page 270, line 9. Before "cannot" insert "that it"
- Page 311, line 10. Omit "also"

CHAPTER I.

THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY STATED.

THE volume of holy Scripture unfolds to the knowledge of mankind a wonderful scheme of redemption, which has been appointed by God as the means of their deliverance from the penalties incurred by sin. This scheme is represented to have taken its rise immediately after the first transgression, and to have received its accomplishment in the publication of the Gospel. Its beginning, the progressive stages of its advancement, and its completion, are discovered to us in many successive revelations, which have been, at different periods extending through a long tract of time, communicated to the world by men divinely inspired and authorized.

Whatever variety may exist as to the time and circumstances of these several communications, it may reasonably be expected, that they should all agree in their reference to one great design of benevolence to the human race. And this expectation will not be disappointed by an examination of the holy Scriptures; provided that such examination be conducted with that attention, that candour, and that deep humility, which are justly due from a creature in contemplating the ways and counsels of the all-wise and perfect Governor of the world. The reference for which we contend may not, indeed, on a separate consideration of each distinct

portion of these writings, be always equally manifest; but the truth of the principle will be readily acknowledged, if we bear in mind, as we ought to do, that every revelation of the divine will which is therein recorded, however partial and restricted in its primary aspect, is to be regarded as having a connexion, nearer or more remote, with that comprehensive purpose of mercy to fallen man which was to receive its completion in the Gospel.

Viewing, then, the several communications of divine truth which compose the body of Scripture, as having one common end, and all of them uniting ultimately in the same design; we might, on the principles of natural religion, be led to suppose, that the substance of each revelation would be the same. Such an expectation might arise from considering, on the one hand, the attributes of God, who is the author of revelation; and on the other, the nature of man, for whose benefit the revelation is intended.

As to the former, natural religion would teach us the unchangeableness of the Deity; it would dispose us to believe in his absolute perfection; and would consequently lead us to regard him, as exempt from those capricious movements, and that irregularity of conduct, which result from the frail and disordered constitution of human minds. Hence, from a contemplation of the divine nature, might we frame an inference, that the benevolence of God to his rational creatures, and his provisions for their welfare, would be at all times perfectly unvaried and uniform.

Then, again, with respect to the nature of man: that would occur to our own observation and expe-

rience, as wearing the same complexion in all ages of the world, deriving its happiness from the same sources, susceptible of the same incitements to duty, endued with the same capacities, subjected to the same dangers, and in need of the same consolations. Hence it would appear reasonable to conclude, that religious truth, in the fullest extent of its discovery, would be at all times equally influential on his practice and conducive to his welfare.

On this combined regard to both the dispenser and the recipient of divine revelation, we might frame an expectation, that every communication from God to man, in which the general interests of man are concerned, would be the same, as to the matter, degree, and extent, of the knowledge conveyed ; however such communications might be diversified as to the time and manner of their being imparted.

Such are the expectations which might arise from viewing the subject simply in itself, and abstractedly from that information which we possess respecting the actual proceedings of the Deity. But here we meet with a striking example of the incompetence of human reason to frame an estimate of the methods, which, under any given circumstances, would be adopted by the Supreme Being, in order to the accomplishment of his wise and merciful designs. For it is undeniable, that the measures of knowledge afforded by divine inspiration to various ages of the world have been very unequal.

This inequality discovers itself as to many points in which the happiness of man is very deeply interested. At various epochs in the progress of the sacred history, the light of divine revelation hath

opened into greater degrees of clearness ; the views which it has unfolded to one age, have been far more full and distinct than any discoveries which had been made to foregoing generations ; till at length it burst forth in its greatest splendour in the sunshine of the Gospel, laying open a scene of joy, consolation, and hope, which before that time had either been wrapped in total darkness, or else imperfectly beholden through the medium of type and prophecy.

This observation applies with particular force to the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment. If man is destined for eternity ; if he shall hereafter be judged according to his works ; if the present life be a state of probation, on which the happiness or misery of a future will depend ; can it be disputed that he is deeply concerned in the knowledge of these truths ? Is it not most highly important to him, that he should regulate his conduct with an eye to that retribution which awaits him ? that he should be aware of the great interest which he has pending, and alive to the awful necessity of securing it ? His future and eternal condition, whether of reward or of punishment, must appear to depend in some degree on the previous knowledge which he has respecting it. Even if we look no further than the present life, still the unspeakable value of this doctrine must be manifest ; whether we regard the restraint which it imposes upon wickedness, the firm support which it yields to innocence and virtue, or the consolation it administers under the sufferings and sorrows incident to our mortal state.

Here then arises a question. Why, in those many various revelations which are recorded as having been imparted in the earlier ages of the world to the patriarchs and the chosen people of God, are those clear assurances of a future state withheld, which are now afforded to ourselves under the Gospel?

To offer a few considerations which may possibly conduce to the solution of this difficulty, and help us to trace the footsteps of divine wisdom in the proceeding to which we refer, will be the design of the following treatise. Before, however, we proceed further in our inquiry, there are two observations which it will be right to premise.

My first observation is, that nothing is here assumed respecting the silence of the Mosaic code on the subject of a future life, further than the absence of all express declaration on that head. Explicit declaration is only one out of a great variety of modes by which truth may be made known. That a future state is not thus directly taught in the Pentateuch, is all that is at present asserted as the groundwork of the argument which is to follow. Whether this important doctrine may be gathered in the way of inference from the Mosaic writings; whether those writings were designed to favour such an inference, and to cherish the hope of a triumph over the grave; these are points which will properly offer themselves for discussion in the progress of our inquiry.

Secondly, We shall consider as separate parts of one entire dispensation, all those various revelations contained in holy Scripture, in which God at sundry times and in divers manners hath spoken to

the world, from the fall of our first parents, down to the sealing up of the vision and prophecy under the Messiah. At the same time, it forms no part of the design of this inquiry to take in the whole scheme of revealed religion : its object being limited to a particular provision of the Mosaic law, for the purpose of illustrating the wisdom of that provision in its adjustment and adaptation to the general plan of which it forms a part. The scheme of man's redemption will be contemplated as it is set forth in holy writ ; and nothing further is proposed, than to prove, from a general view of this mysterious economy, that the specific point selected for consideration, is perfectly consistent with the design of the whole, wisely adapted to promote its success, and perfectly agreeable to the divine attributes of goodness and mercy. If any thing further should be offered, it will be only incidentally, as occasion may happen in the course of our inquiry to suggest reflections, tending to vindicate the ways of Providence, to strengthen the obligations of piety and gratitude, and to silence the cavils of ignorance and presumption.

This last observation has been deemed important for the following reason. While vindicating from objection one provision of the scriptural scheme, we may have occasion to shew, that a departure from that provision would have been ill adapted, either to the general character of the scheme itself, to the established course of Providence, or to the natural constitution of human minds : all of which we refer to God as their author. Yet if this shall be made satisfactorily to appear, it may still be objected : but

why was this scheme framed as it is? or, why was not the course of events differently ordered? or, why were not the minds of men otherwise constituted? To such objections we profess not to give any distinct reply: as indeed they are capable of none, but that which dismisses the objector with an admonition respecting his ignorance^a.

To reason thus looks as if we would take the government of the world out of God's hands into our own. The system of religion which we profess to vindicate is, and must be, imperfectly comprehended by us. Enough is revealed for all the purposes of our happiness; but much more is unrevealed^b. To work contradictions cannot be expected even of Omnipotence: yet we doubt not, that the demands of human pride and inconsideration, such as we have now stated, would appear replete with contradictions to a mind, capable of embracing all those possibilities, relations, and consequences, which lie open to the contemplation of the Supreme Intelligence. It will suffice for us to shew, that the system itself is, with regard to the subject of our present consideration, free from inconsistency and self-contradiction: though, even in this limited point of view, we protest against admitting, as a real inconsistency, that which may appear such to us, whose mental vision, unaided by a light from heaven, can penetrate little further than the surface of the objects which lie immediately around it.

^a "Our ignorance, as it is the common, is really a satisfactory, answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of Providence." Butler's Analogy, part i. chap. vii.

^b See Butler's Analogy, pt. ii. ch. iv. as also pt. i. ch. vii.

CHAPTER II.

REASONS WHY THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE IS
NOT EXPRESSLY TAUGHT IN THE WRITINGS OF MOSES.

Unius PONTIFICIUM Christi est dare animis salutem.

Arnobius adv. Gen. II. 65.

IN examining a complex piece of mechanism, if we would form a right judgment of the structure of any of its component parts, it is requisite that we should have in view the end and purpose which is to be answered by the operation of the whole machine: otherwise it will be impossible to frame a just estimate of the skill with which that component part has been framed to the performance of its subordinate office.

A mode of inquiry analogous to what has now been described, is that which it will be right for us to pursue in the consideration of our present subject. The whole body of revelation must be viewed as one entire dispensation, receiving its full and complete developement in the Gospel. Of this whole, so much as relates to the Israelites under the Law is to be regarded as a subordinate part, having only a relative connexion with the great and final purpose. When therefore we inquire, Why was the knowledge of a future state afforded to the Israelites, so slender in comparison with that which Christians now enjoy? the measure is to be contemplated, not simply as it may have affected the

condition of that single people, but as having an ulterior reference to that glorious redemption, which God had decreed to accomplish in the fulness of time for the benefit of all the children of men. In other words, we must see whether we can discover, in this particular provision, a consistency with the final purpose, to which this and all the other subordinate parts of revealed religion are professedly accommodated.

Let us advert, then, to that great fundamental principle of pure Christianity, that *the atonement of Christ is the only warrantable foundation on which a human creature can establish his hopes respecting a future life*. Such being the case, would not any explicit declarations respecting a future state, or any clear assurances of the felicity which in that state is prepared for the faithful: would not such declarations and assurances, I say, have been premature, if they had been conveyed antecedently to the performance of that meritorious sacrifice; or, at least, before a distinct explanation had been furnished to mankind of the only ground on which they could entertain any well founded hopes relating to another world? We know, that all expectations of the divine favour which stand upon the basis of human virtue and obedience, are utterly incompatible with the plan of our redemption, and that the plea of merit is one on which no flesh will be accepted before God. But would not a hope of this nature, offensive as it is to God, and utterly unwarrantable in itself, have been fondly cherished by the pride and ignorance of man, if at any earlier period he had possessed that distinct infor-

mation respecting future rewards and punishments which the Gospel unfolds?

It becomes not us to scrutinize the propriety of that appointment, which ordained so late a period of the world for an event of the most momentous influence on the condition of the human race. It was a decree of that unsearchable wisdom, which is alone competent to select the most suitable means for the accomplishment of its ends, and so to frame the plans of divine mercy and benevolence, as to give to them the fullest and most extensive effect of which, in the nature of things, they are capable. Such, however, is the fact: that event to which we are indebted for our redemption and recovery, was not to take place till many ages after the introduction and prevalence of the evil which it was designed to remedy. The crucifixion of our Redeemer was about four thousand years after the transgression of Adam. Of the long intermediate space between the introduction of sin and the atonement for it, but a few centuries had enjoyed any distinct and intelligible communications respecting the mode in which the restoration of mankind was to be accomplished. The prophecy contained in the fifty-third, and part of the foregoing, chapters of Isaiah, may be considered as the earliest prediction of a suffering and dying Messiah, which could have been distinctly and generally understood before its fulfilment^c. Earlier intimations, indeed, we have.

^c “ From that prophet, justly called evangelical, who was the
“ *first commissioned to lift up the veil that covered the mystery of*
“ *our redemption*, and to draw it forth to open view from beneath
“ the shade of Jewish ceremonies and types, through which it

The Book of Psalms contains many a picture in which the humiliation and death of the Son of God are circumstantially delineated. We have the symbolical representations of the Levitical ritual. We have also various transactions of an emblematical character in the earlier stages of the sacred history. These are, each in its kind, clearly illustrative of the scheme of mercy which had been progressively carried on from the beginning. They are corroborative testimonies to the evidence by which Christianity is supported. But nothing of earlier date than the passage referred to, can be justly interpreted as a distinct and perspicuous announcement of the mystery of man's redemption through the vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah. The date of this prophecy must be fixed within considerably less than eight centuries before the death of Christ.

Thus long did a state of ignorance prevail, not only among mankind in general, but even among the peculiar family of God, as to the means by which the forgiveness and salvation of man were to be effected. In this state of things, what would have been the natural consequence of conveying in the Law of Moses any clearer discoveries respecting a future world? The Israelite who lived under that Law, might derive from it, indeed, a *general* faith in the Messiah, together with a persuasion that his ad-

“ had been hitherto but faintly discerned, we have a description
 “ of that great propitiatory sacrifice, whereby our salvation has
 “ been effected, as plain as it is possible for language to convey
 “ it.” Abp. Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. ii. p. 15.
 Dublin, 1809. The words quoted relate to the prophecy referred
 to in the text.

vent would be the occasion of signal benefits to his own nation, and even to all mankind. But he could not, more particularly in the early ages of that nation, frame any distinct conceptions respecting the peculiar character of that great achievement of divine wisdom and love, by which the glory of God was in after-ages to be revealed to the world; which was to cancel transgression, and to lay open the avenues of mercy; without which, all penitence on the part of man would be unavailing, and all obedience unacceptable. Under these circumstances, any clear assurance of immortal life would naturally have led to gross misconception of the terms on which God is pleased to offer that gift to mankind. A promise *conveyed in* the Law, would have been understood as a promise *annexed to the observance of* the Law. Obedience to that Law would have been consequently regarded as a requisite, and as a sufficient, qualification for obtaining from God the fulfilment of the promise. It would have been viewed as constituting a meritorious title to eternal life. Satisfaction to the divine justice, as a necessary preliminary to pardon and favour, would never have been thought of. Thus would the Israelite have been perverted in the principles of his faith. His hopes of happiness would have rested on grounds inconsistent with the eternal purpose and attributes of God. Thus would the self-righteous, blind to the corruption of his heart and the defects of his behaviour, have claimed the reward of immortality as his due; while the humble and contrite, sensible of his own transgressions, of the perfection of the Law which he had broken, and of the justice and

holiness of the God whom he had offended, would altogether have despaired of mercy.

But further. The wisdom of God had decreed, that the publication of the Law should be many ages anterior to that of the Gospel; and the former was designed to be introductory and preparatory to the latter. Let us inquire, then, in what manner the success and reception of the more perfect dispensation would have been affected by any deviation, as to the point we are at present considering, from the actual provisions of that dispensation which was preparatory to it. If I mistake not, it will appear, upon examination, that the tendency of such a deviation would have been greatly detrimental to the cause of Christianity; and that it would have created an obstacle, first, to its being received at all, and secondly, to its being received in its purity.

First, If the Law had been as explicit and declaratory as the Gospel on the subject of a future state, this circumstance must have been unfavourable to the establishment of Christianity. For the Jews, to whom this religion was first preached, would naturally have been indisposed to embrace a new charter, which contained no extension of the privileges conveyed to them in an old one which they already possessed. This position will appear supported by powerful evidence, if we take a brief view of the circumstances under which the Gospel was offered to that nation, and of the reception which it actually experienced among them.

The preaching of the humiliation and death of the Son of God was accompanied with an offer to such as should embrace the Christian covenant, of

life and immortality ; which, in the language of St. Paul, “ were brought to light through the Gospel^d.” Notwithstanding, however, this powerful recommendation of the faith proposed to their acceptance ; notwithstanding all the mighty evidences of truth, by which the ministry of our Lord and his apostles was supported ; the cross of Christ was a stumblingblock and a rock of offence to the Jews. Few of them could be prevailed on to embrace a doctrine, which severely mortified their pride, deeply shocked their national prejudices, and brought with it a stinging disappointment to their carnal and ambitious views.

Let us suppose now, that the promise of eternal life had been, in the preaching of the apostles, not what it now is, the peculiar distinction of the evangelical covenant ; but that it had been the mere repetition of a promise, which the Jews and their forefathers had for many ages enjoyed : in what manner would the progress of the new religion have been affected by this circumstance ? Would it not have thus been stripped of that very attraction which chiefly recommended it to the hearts of its early converts ? The advantages which it really possessed were insufficient to overpower those feelings of hostility by which it was encountered : would not then a more determined opposition, and a more general rejection, have been the probable result, if the promise of life and immortality had been annexed to a previous covenant ?

An incident recorded in the history of our Lord

^d 2 Tim. i. 10.

will serve to assist us in the decision of this question. Many of the early disciples of Christ, taking offence at the doctrine which he taught on an occasion of public discourse, withdrew from associating with him. At this time, as the evangelist informs us, "Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? THOU HAST THE WORDS OF "ETERNAL LIFE"^c." The motive which actuated this apostle, we may reasonably suppose to have been entertained in common by all the primitive adherents of the Saviour. Would this motive have been equally cogent, if the words of eternal life had been written in the Law of Moses, in characters equally plain and distinct with those in which we read them in the scriptures of the New Covenant? Far from it. Had the *promises* of the Gospel contained nothing that was new, either as to the clearness or the authority of its declarations on this most interesting subject, it is utterly improbable that its *doctrines* would, in that perverted state of feeling and opinion which prevailed at the time of its introduction, have met with any favourable or even serious attention.

The prejudices which the Jews had imbibed in favour of their national religion, constituted a principal obstacle to the success of the apostolical labours for their conversion. Of these prejudices, one of the most deeply rooted had arisen from the high esteem and veneration with which they regarded their ancient law. By many of them, so high an

^c John vi. 67, 68.

opinion was entertained of its excellency and perfection, that they viewed it sufficient for the utmost needs of man. They supposed it to contain the rule of justification, together with every thing else which is necessary in order to everlasting life^f. The want of any new revelation they would not admit. Nor could they be prevailed on to entertain an opinion, so degrading, as they thought, to the honour of their national code and of themselves, as to suppose, that the oracles of God, which had been intrusted to their exclusive keeping, were in their design only preparatory^g to a further communication of mercy and truth, which was to be more ample in its discoveries, and more diffusively imparted. In these mistaken notions and contracted views, we discover the cause which chiefly operated in producing that general rejection which the Gospel experienced among the Jewish nation. And would not this cause have operated with a force greatly augmented, if their Law, which, being weak^h, was unable to *give* everlasting life, had nevertheless *plainly assured* them of it?

Secondly, Had the Law of Moses supplied a greater clearness of discovery respecting a future life, it

^f See Macknight on the Epistles, Pref. to Rom. sect. 2 and 3; and Pref. to Gal. sect. 3.

^g “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, *shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.*” Gal. iii. 23, 24.

^h “If there had been a law which *could* have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” Gal. iii. 21. “What the law *could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh.*” Rom. viii. 3.

would have thus contributed to mislead the early converts to the Gospel from an apprehension of its pure and genuine doctrines. This position will also be established by a reference to the circumstances which actually attended the first preaching of Christianity.

The same prejudice, which, in its influence on one portion of the Jewish people, led to the total rejection of the Gospel, occasioned considerable difficulty in conveying to that class of them who embraced it, correct notions of its design and character. They misunderstood the intention of the Levitical ordinances, and formed an exaggerated estimate of their value and excellence. Hence arose the difficulty of convincing them, that the justification of man, which was the great requisite as a qualification for everlasting life, could be accomplished without an observance of the sacrifices, purifications, and other ceremonies, prescribed in the Mosaic ritual. "Ex-cept," said they, "ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved^k." Now, though a future state forms no part of the Mosaic covenant, yet it is undeniable, that the belief of that doctrine was generally entertained among the Jews in our Saviour's time: and it has been justly observed by bishop Warburton, that the superstitious attachment of the Jewish converts to the whole observance of the Law originated in an erroneous persuasion, that that doctrine formed a part of the Mosaic dispensation^k. Suppose, then, that the Mosaic Law

ⁱ Acts xv. 1.

^k "Permit me to observe further, that this rabbinical notion of a future state of rewards and punishments in the Mosaic dispensation, which still encourages the remnant of your nation

had actually countenanced such an opinion ; suppose that it had conveyed a plain and declaratory promise of everlasting life : would not an apparent sanction have thus been given to the misconceptions of the Jewish convert ? And would not an increased aversion to the simplicity of the Christian doctrine have been an inevitable consequence flowing from the encouragement thus given to mistaken views ?

The prejudices of the Jews in favour of their ancient Law had the effect of alienating from the Gospel the great majority of that nation. Under the influence of these same prejudices, that small portion of them who embraced the new covenant, were led to disfigure its doctrine with ritual observances, possessing in themselves no intrinsic value, and of which the relative utility had ceased. In either case, these prejudices would have drawn encouragement from any explicit statement, in the Law of Moses, respecting the ultimate purpose of God as to the future condition of mankind. With the great body of the Jewish people, such a statement would have operated as a considerable obstruction to the acknowledgment of the Messiah. In the minds of the Jewish converts, it would have favoured the entertainment of opinions, utterly re-

“ to persist in rejecting the Gospel of Jesus, was the very prejudice which, in the first ages of Christianity, so superstitiously attached the converts from Judaism to the whole observance of the Law.” Divine Legation of Moses. Dedication to the Jews prefixed to the Fourth Book.

That this notion was really entertained by the Jews, may be seen from 2 Macc. vii. 36. where the Law of Moses is plainly designated as “ God’s covenant of everlasting life.”

pugnant to those terms on which alone (consistently with the knowledge afforded us of the divine will and attributes) we are taught to hope for a participation in the covenanted mercies of God. On the whole, its influence must have been at variance with the character, and inconsistent with the success, of the Christian scheme of redemption.

Add to this, the danger that would have arisen, lest the Gentile converts should be infected with the errors of their judaizing brethren, when the Pentateuch (thus combining the Levitical precepts with the promise of everlasting life, but silent, otherwise than in the language of type and allegory and obscure intimation, as to the atonement of Christ and the evangelical rule of justification) had been placed in their hands, as a portion of that volume which was henceforth to be the standard of their faith.

For it is to be remembered, that the ancient people of Israel are not the only persons whose welfare is involved in this question. The Mosaic code was destined to form a standard portion of the volume of inspiration, for the perpetual instruction and edification of mankind in general¹, after its ceremonial and political enactments had been abrogated in favour of a more perfect and comprehensive dispensation. What now, in its influence on the general welfare of man, must have been the consequence of introducing into it any positive declara-

¹ "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for
"our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the
"Scriptures might have hope." Rom. xv. 4.

tions respecting a future state? What effect would thus have been produced on the religious sentiments of those who should in after-ages embrace the Gospel? Would it not have led them to contemplate a legal obedience as the ground of justification? When it was discovered, that a promise of everlasting happiness had been conveyed by the divine law to those ages and generations to whom the manner of our redemption was a mystery, would it not have been difficult to persuade men, that the merits and sacrifice of Christ are the only just foundation of their hopes respecting a future state? Would not they have been prone to overlook the connexion which subsists between the cross of Christ and their own salvation? There are those who deny the necessity and the efficacy of an atonement as the means of reconciliation between God and man. Would not such opinions have enjoyed, on our present supposition, a show of countenance and support from Scripture, of which they are now destitute? If the Law had revealed in a declaratory manner the doctrine of a future life, this doctrine must have either been a sanction to the Law, or not. If it had been a sanction, then the peculiar promise of the Gospel, springing from the precious sacrifice of Christ, would have been anticipated in a covenant of works. If it had not been a sanction, then it could have been no longer a doctrine of future reward and punishment, but an antinomian doctrine of future happiness and misery, from which all moral designation would have been excluded, and which must have operated in a manner totally destructive of piety and virtue.

If we admit the correctness of the foregoing view, it must appear, that the annexing to the Levitical Law a promise of everlasting life, would have had a tendency to excite, in the minds of both Israelites and Christians, sentiments, inconsistent with that humility which forms a necessary qualification for the divine favour, and repugnant to that faith which is the evangelical condition of salvation. We cannot, therefore, fail to recognize, in the omission of such promise, an instance of consistency and agreement with the general scheme of Christian redemption, and a measure of subserviency to the ultimate design of revealed religion.

Indeed, when we contemplate, on the one hand, the awful and mysterious reserve of the Law, and on the other, the plain, direct, and frequent assurances of the Gospel; we can hardly fail to recognize in the contrast, an appointment wisely adapted to produce in the minds of the Jews, a conviction of the inadequacy of the former dispensation, and of the sufficiency of the latter, as a guide to happiness in a future state. No means of greater efficacy could have been employed to enhance, in their estimation, the excellence of a religion, which was thus able to satisfy the ardent wishes and anxieties of men respecting their eternal condition. Nothing could have been more conducive to a just conception on their parts of the design of their national code, as being merely preparatory to a fuller manifestation of the divine glory and a more ample provision for the wants of mankind. Had the case been different; had the words of Moses been similar to those of Christ and his apostles; there would have been little

reason to wonder at the neglect and disregard which were shewn to the ministry of the latter. From men who possess distinct assurances of immortal happiness, together with clear instructions as to the mode of attaining it, and these sanctioned by the authority of God himself; from such men, I say, what reason have we to expect any favourable, or even patient, regard to the pretensions of a new revelation? What can such a revelation bestow upon them, beyond what they already have? So full a measure of hope and consolation attached to their ancient faith, must have satisfied their utmost desires, and have destroyed that powerful inducement to embrace the Gospel which arose from its bright prospects and cheering encouragements.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE WAS ALWAYS ENTERTAINED BY THE ISRAELITES FROM THE VERY EARLIEST PERIOD OF THEIR HISTORY.

ΕΙ δὲ τις, επηρεισας την διανοιαν τῷ του νομοθετου βουληματι, και τη κατ' αυτον πολιτειᾳ εξεταζων τα κατα τους Ιουδαιους, συγκρινει τη νυν αγωγή των λοιπων εθνων· ΟΥΔΕΝΑΣ ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΑΝ ΘΑΤΜΑΣΑΙ· ὡς εν ανθρωποις παντα μεν τα μη χρησιμα τῷ γενει των ανθρωπων περιηρημενους, μονα δε τα ευχρηστα παραδεξαμενους.—‘Οποιον δ' ην παρ' αυτοις το εξ ετι ἀπαλων ονυχων διδασκεσθαι ὑπεραναβαινειν μεν πασαν την αισθητην φύσιν, και μηδαιον αυτης νομίζειν ιδρυσθαι τον Θεον, ανω δε και ὑπερ τα σωματα ζητειν αυτον; ΠΗΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΕ ΤΟ, ΣΧΕΔΟΝ ΑΜΑ ΓΕΝΕΣΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΜΠΛΗΡΩΣΕΙ ΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΥ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ ΑΤΤΟΤΕ ΤΗΝ ΤΗΣ ΨΥΧΗΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑΝ, ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ὙΠΟ ΓΗΝ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΤΗΡΙΑ, ΚΑΙ ΤΑΣ ΤΙΜΑΣ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΛΩΣ ΒΕΒΙΩΚΟΤΩΝ; *Origenes contra Celsum*, V. 42.

BUT what are we then to conclude? Because the Mosaic Law contains no explicit declarations relating to a future state, shall we therefore say that no belief of that doctrine was entertained by the ancient people of Israel? This is no consequence of our admission respecting the silence of that code^a. It is, on the contrary, a point which claims a suspended judgment and a careful examination. It is greatly important in itself, by reason of its connexion with the general economy of revelation: and it brings

^a Warburton, however, contends, that it is a necessary consequence of that admission: “One might fairly conclude,” says he, “that the people’s not having this doctrine, was a necessary consequence of Moses’s not teaching it, in a Law which forbids the least addition [Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32.] to the written institute.” *Div. Leg. b. v. §. 5. vol. v. p. 174. Ed. 1811.* This is a bold flight of logic. See the Supplementary Remarks at the end of this work.

with it an additional claim to our attention on two accounts. First, because the interests of revelation, as to this particular, have been assailed by the misrepresentation and sophistry of its enemies^b. Secondly, because those same interests have experienced some degree of injustice from the mistaken views of its incorrect and injudicious advocates: the question we are about to discuss having been the subject of a controversy, in which various contending disputants have, with the usual vehemence of polemical contradiction, pushed their respective conclusions to extremes, which are not only widely distant from each other, but, as we conceive, equally remote from the truth.

On the one hand it is maintained, that “ the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment “ did make the most essential part of the Mosaic dispensation.” Among the supporters of this opinion are reckoned the unbelieving Jews of the present day, and several of the ancient Christian writers^c.

With regard to the unbelieving Jews, in whom conviction is obstructed by inveterate prejudice, it is natural enough that they should avail themselves to the utmost of a principle, which may serve to countenance their obstinacy in resisting the evidence of the Gospel. Scarcely any thing, in their estimation, can tend more effectually to the disparagement of the Christian scheme, than a notion, that the blessings connected with it are in no degree superior to

^b Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Gibbon.

^c This is stated on the authority of Warburton: from whom also the foregoing citation is extracted. Divine Legation of Moses, book vi. sect. 1. See the Supplementary Remarks.

those of their ancient Law. Scarcely any thing can be more in unison with the belief (to which they so tenaciously adhere) in the perfect nature and eternal duration of the Mosaic institutions. It has been justly observed, that the violence they have offered to the meaning of the sacred text, and the distorted interpretations of it which they have adopted in the vain attempt to establish this position, have originated in their unwillingness to acknowledge the imperfect character and temporary design of the Law^d; for these seem to follow as an inevitable consequence, from admitting the absence, in that Law, of any promise respecting a future state. But it is matter of just regret, that an opinion so derogatory to the honour of the Gospel and to the value of the Christian sacrifice, should gain reception with those who believe, that man cannot be justified by the deeds of the Law, and that the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin. If the Law could not give justification, and without justification eternal life cannot be obtained, we see not how a promise of life and immortality could be annexed to the Law. The doctrine of a future state, we are to observe, contains both a promise and a denunciation, it embraces both reward and punishment. The promise, as we have seen, could not, without violating the consistency of revealed doctrine, have been directly

^d “Nunc Judæi multum de futuro sæculo, de resurrectione mortuorum, de vita æterna loquuntur et ex legis verbis ea ex-torquere potius quam ostendere conantur, ne legem Mosis imperfectam esse cogantur agnoscere.” *Episcopii Inst. Theol. lib. iii. sect. 1. cap. 2.* See the Supplementary Remarks.

inserted. How then could the whole have been introduced where a part was plainly inadmissible?

In this case, the burden of proof rests with our opponents. There can be no necessity for establishing the negative of the position, till a previous view has been exhibited of the grounds on which its validity is maintained. But if the writings of Moses are admitted as the only competent authority for the decision of this question, it is plain and indisputable that no such authority can be adduced: since there is not a single passage in the Pentateuch, which can, upon any fair principles of interpretation, be construed into a direct and explicit assertion of a future state of reward and punishment^e.

^e “Primo quæritur an in V. Testamento nullum omnino exstet vitæ æternæ promissum? De eo enim a nonnullis dubitatur. Resp. Huic quæstioni optime mihi videtur respondere Augustinus, distinguens nomen Veteris Testamenti: nam eo intelligi ait, aut pactum illud, quod in monte Sinai factum est, aut omnia quæ in Mose, hagiographis, ac prophetis continentur. Si Vetus Testamentum posteriori sensu accipiatur, concedi forsitan possit, esse in eo nonnulla futuræ vitæ non obscura indicia; præsertim in libro Psalmorum, Daniele, et Ezekiele; *quanquam et in his libris clarum ac disertum æternæ vitæ promissum vix ac ne vix quidem reperiatur*. Sed hæc qualiacunque erant, non erant nisi præludia et anticipationes gratiæ evangelicæ; *ad legem non pertinebant*. Lex enim quatenus ab apostolo in suis cum Judæis disputationibus consideratur, proprie designat pactum in Sinai factum. Vide Gal. iv. ver. 24. Illud autem habuit promissa terrena et terrena tantum, ut videre est Exod. xxiii. 25, 26. Lev. xxvi. 3. et Deut. vii. 12, 13. et xviii. 2. &c. Si quis contra sentiat ejus est locum dare, ubi æternæ vitæ promissio extat: quod certe impossibile est.” Bulli Harmonia Apostolica, Diss. II. x. 8.

A contrary view of the subject has, however, been maintained. It has been contended, that, so far was the Law from affording to the subjects of its government any countenance for the belief of a future retribution, that that doctrine was not even entertained among the Jews till a short time previous to the period which terminates the sacred history of the Old Testament. This position comes to us recommended by the sanction of a name^f, which may justly command whatever veneration is due to genius and learning, subsisting together in a splendid and almost unrivalled combination^g.

The authority of an illustrious name cannot, however, invalidate the right of investigating truth, nor exonerate from the sacred obligation of vindicating it. It is fit, therefore, that the opinion we have now stated should be subjected to a fair examination, for the purpose of ascertaining its agreement with, or its repugnance to, the dictates of reason and the

^f Bishop Warburton.

^g See Div. Leg. b. v. §. 4. vol. v. p. 146. The Israelitish polity is designated as one "which had not the sanction of a future state of rewards and punishments." B. v. §. 5. p. 158. "I go on to shew that future rewards and punishments, which COULD NOT BE THE SANCTION of the Mosaic dispensation, WERE NOT TAUGHT in it at all: and that, in consequence of this omission, the PEOPLE had not the doctrine of a future state for many ages." Ibid. p. 174. "I shall shew from a circumstance the clearest and most incontestible, *that the Israelites from the time of Moses to the time of their captivity, had not the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment.*" B. iii. Appen. vol. iii. p. 321. "It is very true, *God's own chosen people were shut out from the knowledge of a future state.*"

standard of revealed truth. To this examination we will proceed.

With respect, then, to the degree and extent of religious knowledge in general, which were possessed by the chosen people of God, we are taught to believe, that they stood on a high ground of superiority to the rest of mankind. The points of distinction between them and the Gentile world consisted in exclusive advantages belonging to themselves. That they were favoured only in some particulars of the revelation which they enjoyed, while in other points of doctrine this favour was counterbalanced by a comparative ignorance and deficiency, is a groundless supposition. The language of holy writ affords the most unequivocal testimony, that the difference between them and the Gentiles, as to all points of religious faith, was in every respect advantageous to the Israelite; that it had arisen out of a more abundant measure of the divine favour, and a greater degree of clearness and certainty in the discoveries of the divine will. The following citations cannot, without harshness, be reconciled to any other view of the subject. “Now therefore, if
“ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto
“me above all people: for all the earth is mine.
“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,
“and an holy nation^h.” “What nation is there so
“great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the
“Lord our God is in all things that we call upon
“him for? And what nation is there so great, that

^h Exodus xix, 5, 6.

“hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all
“this law which I set before you this dayⁱ?” “Ye
“stand this day all of you before the Lord your
“God,—that thou shouldest enter into covenant
“with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which
“the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that
“he may establish thee to-day for a people unto him-
“self, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he
“hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto
“thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob^k.”
“What one nation in the earth is like thy people,
“even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a
“people to himself, and to make him a name, and
“to do for you great things and terrible, for thy
“land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to
“thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?
“For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Is-
“rael to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou,
“Lord, art become their God^l.” “Happy art
“thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people
“saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and
“who is the sword of thy excellency^m!” These de-
clarations are indeed general: but they are wholly
inconsistent with the existence of such a signal dis-
advantage as that which is involved in the supposi-
tion of Warburton. The following passage has how-
ever a closer relation to the subject: “This is your
“wisdom and your understanding in the sight of
“the nations, which shall hear all these statutes,
“and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and

ⁱ Deut. iv. 7, 8.^k Deut. xxix. 10, 12, 13.^l 2 Sam. vii. 23, 24.^m Deut. xxxiii. 29.

“understanding peopleⁿ.” But St. Paul is still more express to the point: “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? *Much every way*: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God^o.”

Now the belief of a future state has been entertained in every age to which the memory of the world extends, and by every nation among whom any religious sentiments have been found to exist. This truth has been incontestably maintained by the celebrated writer whose opinion we are now examining^p; subject, however, (according to the views of the same writer,) to the sole exception of the Israelites who lived between the time of Moses and the captivity of Judah. On the inestimable value of this doctrine in its tendency to promote the hap-

ⁿ Deut. iv. 6.

^o Rom. iii. 1, 2.

^p Divine Legation of Moses, book ii. sect. 1. “There never was, in any age of the world, from the most early accounts of time, to this present hour, any civil-policed nation or people, who had a religion, of which the chief foundation and support was not the doctrine of a FUTURE STATE of rewards and punishments; the JEWISH PEOPLE only excepted.” So also Bayle, whose words are quoted by Warburton as follows: “Toutes les religions du monde, tant la vraie que les fausses, roulent sur ce grand pivot, qu’il y a un juge invisible qui punit et qui récompense, *après cette vie*, les actions des hommes tant extérieures qu’intérieures. C’est de là que l’on suppose que découle la principale utilité de la religion.” In order to mark the very extensive prevalence of the doctrine of a future state, it may not be uninteresting to observe, that cases have been alleged of barbarous nations, among whom the *belief of a God* was extinct, or nearly so, but who nevertheless were found to retain the *belief of a future state*. See Warburton, Div. Leg. b. ii. §. 4. vol. ii. p. 209. and Tillotson’s Sermons, vol. iii. Sermon 120.

piness of mankind ; on its importance as the great incitement to virtue, the main pillar and support of human society, the sanction and enforcement of morality ; on its connexion with the private duties of individuals, and the public welfare of civil communities : we need not expatiate. That it is the anchor of the soul when beaten by the blasts and storms of adversity ; that it is of absolute necessity in order to sustain and invigorate the spirits of suffering innocence under the discouragement of an unequal Providence ; that it provides the most effectual restraint upon the evil passions of mankind ; that the wisest provisions of legislative policy, unaided by its support, are but feeble barriers against violence and injustice : these are principles, so generally recognized by common acknowledgment, that they seem to border upon the character of self-evident truths. We need not dwell upon the hardship of man being accountable, without knowing that he is so ; of his being capable of everlasting happiness, without incitement to labour after it ; of his being subject to retribution, and yet not aware of his danger. Neither the advantages connected with the belief of this doctrine, nor the miseries attendant upon the want of it, can be denied or disputed. On the whole, it may be asserted, that, of all the doctrines of revealed religion, there is none so important in its consequences, none so interesting to the feelings of mankind, none attended with such a powerful moral influence, as the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment.

Can it then be deemed consistent with the notion of a people peculiarly favoured by God, that they

should continue for nine hundred years^q, excluded from participating in a benefit, which during the same period was enjoyed by every other nation in the world, even the most idolatrous and wicked? Can they with propriety have been designated as a preeminently *wise and understanding people*; can they have gained the admiration of the world as such; if they had regarded themselves in no other light than the beasts which perish, while every other nation maintained the hope of an eternal and happy existence as the reward of virtue? Shall we, in conformity with the language of St. Paul, admit that they had in *every* respect much advantage over the rest of mankind; and shall we yet believe that they were totally destitute of that doctrine which is more essential to the happiness of man than any other religious principle whatever? The two propositions appear repugnant and contradictory to each other; nor will it be an easy task for ingenuity to explain, how the latter of them can be reconciled with that submission which is due to apostolical authority.

Will it be alleged in reply, that the disadvantage of this omission was compensated by the regular distribution of temporal good and evil? To talk thus, is to contradict the voice of nature, and to falsify the concurrent testimony of mankind^r. For when was the greatest prosperity able to calm that

^q The Law was given (according to the common chronology) 1491 years, and the captivity took place 588 years, before the Christian era: the intervening space thus amounting to 903 years.

^r Warburton, however, speaks of this distribution as "an equivalent for future rewards and punishments." Div. Leg. b. v. §. 6. vol. v. p. 187.

dread of annihilation which universally prevails in the minds of men? “*Quæ potest in vita esse jucunditas,*” says Cicero, “*cum dies atque noctes cogitandum sit, jam jamque esse moriendum*”^s?” Where can you find an antidote for this fear except in the hope of prolonged existence and future happiness? Man in his very best estate is altogether vanity: he cannot think on the grave without feeling himself to be so. To live in affluence; to have within our reach all the various comforts which the world affords, together with the fullest capacity of enjoying them: this kind of life has generally been found to increase, instead of mitigating, the horror of death; not to mollify the wound, but to give a sharper pungency to the sting. Nor, again, is there any cause which operates more powerfully to weaken men’s attachment to the present life, than the want of temporal blessings, the frequency of calamity, and the long experience of adversity and suffering. These observations are expressed in language equally just and beautiful by the son of Sirach: “O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat! O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience”^t!”

It must appear then, that the doctrine of a future

^s Tusc. Disp. I. 7.

^t Eccclus. xli. 1, 2.

state formed a principle of religious belief with the Israelitish people throughout every period of their existence as a nation. This inference must necessarily follow from the argument which has been now stated, unless the validity of that argument shall be shaken by objections of greater force than any which we anticipate. The position will, however, acquire a great accession of evidence from the considerations which will be offered in the following chapter: in which we propose to institute an inquiry into the sources from which the doctrine of a future state, viewed as an article of popular faith entertained by the ancient Israelites, may have been derived.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SOURCES FROM WHICH THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES MAY HAVE DERIVED THEIR BELIEF IN A FUTURE STATE.

THE difference between the religious condition of the ancient Israelite and that of the heathen world, was entirely favourable to the Israelite: it did not consist in a partial superiority counterbalanced by corresponding disadvantages; but in all particulars, whether as to knowledge or happiness, the Israelite was superior. This proposition we have endeavoured to establish. Admitting the validity of the reasoning by which it was supported, we must infer, that if the belief in a future state was entertained by the Gentile world, it must have been entertained in common with them by this peculiar nation. When therefore we propose to inquire into the origin of that belief, as it was received among the Israelites, it will be requisite that we should, in the first place, investigate those common sources from which it was derived into the religious system of the whole world. This branch of our inquiry will therefore form the first head of the ensuing disquisition. We shall, secondly, advance a step further towards the object in view, by illustrating the negative tendency of the Mosaic Law. This will be for the purpose of shewing, that the omission in that code of any positive declarations respecting a future state would have no tendency to eradicate from the mind of the Israelite that belief, which he would otherwise have cherished

in common with his fellow-creatures. Thirdly, we shall undertake to prove, that the provisions of the Law, far from tending to suppress this doctrine, were positively adapted to countenance and keep it alive, in a degree which far exceeded any encouragement which was afforded to the belief of it among the heathen.

SECTION I.

Inquiry into the origin of the belief in a future state, considered as a doctrine belonging to the universal religion of mankind.

Qua de re ingens apud philosophos disceptatio est : nec quidquam tamen explicare aut probare potuerunt ii, qui verum de anima sentiebant ; expertes enim hujus divinæ eruditionis, nec argumenta vera, quibus vincerent, attulerunt, nec testimonia, quibus probarent. *Lactantii Div. Inst.* iii. 13.

FIRST then, we are to investigate the causes which must have operated on the minds of the Israelites, in common with the rest of mankind, to produce a belief in a future state of retribution.

A few prefatory remarks will here be serviceable in the way of introduction to this branch of our inquiry.

It is by no means a necessary part of the reasoning we are about to pursue, that we should account for the universal prevalence of this doctrine, by accurately tracing the connexion between the effect and its cause. It is sufficient for our purpose, that the doctrine itself did universally prevail among mankind ; as the celebrated writer, against whose principles we contend, has sufficiently proved in a

learned and elaborate disquisition on the subject^a. If then it be certain, that this doctrine was universally incorporated into the religious systems of the Gentile world; if it be certain that the Israelite, as to all points of religious distinction between him and the Gentile, was eminently favoured, and that he was not, as to any such point, subject to a disadvantage in which the other did not partake; lastly, if it be also certain, that the want of this doctrine would, in its influence on the happiness of man, be a very great disadvantage: if these things be undeniable, how can you evade the conclusion, that the chosen people of God must have enjoyed at least as much light upon this subject as the rest of the world?

But it is, on the other hand, a principle highly important to our argument, that the universality of this belief in a future retribution be regarded as the result of a special appointment of the divine will. We are fully warranted in so regarding it: nay, we cannot without impiety regard it otherwise, even though the secondary causes, through which that will has been carried into effect, may lie concealed from our view. It is not necessary in order to recognise an appointment of Providence, that we should be able to trace the various successive steps which have intervened between its first origin and its final accomplishment. The mode of operation belonging to some of the most important laws which regulate the movements of the natural creation, will ever baffle the utmost penetration and sagacity of

^a Div. Leg. book ii. §. 1. et seq.

man: such are the gravitation of bodies, the process of vegetation, and the connexion subsisting between the volition and the motions of animal life. Now as we alike refer to God, as their author, both the dispensations of revealed religion and the constitution of the natural world, it is reasonable to suppose, that a similarity of proceeding should be observable in both. It cannot therefore be required, that we should distinctly unfold all the means which may have been employed by Infinite Wisdom, for the purpose of bringing about a general concurrence in the expectations of mankind respecting a future retribution. Methods may have been employed, and those too of powerful operation, with a view to this end, which the unsearchable wisdom of God may have judged it right to withhold from the knowledge of his creatures^b. The possible employment of such methods we may well conceive.

^b "There might possibly be among the few faithful in the world a traditionary exposition of the promises of God, grounded upon more express revelations, made either before or soon after the flood, *than have come down to our times.*" Bishop Sherlock's Dissertations, Diss. II. p. 176. in the 4th vol. of his works, edit. Oxford, 1812. The observation relates to the celebrated passage in Job, xix. 25, 26, 27. The term *promises* is not, indeed, strictly agreeable to the views maintained in this treatise; but we may by a parity of reasoning suppose, that means sufficiently efficacious may have been providentially employed for the same purpose, of which means no knowledge has been transmitted to us. But indeed I do not object to the above term, provided that nothing further is understood by it than *the promise of a Messiah*, the blessedness of whose expected advent could in no other way have been reasonably understood, than by regarding him as the author of everlasting life, and of man's deliverance from the effects of the fall.

This ought to be borne in mind as a weighty consideration in the reasoning which is about to be introduced; since it is adequate to supply any deficiency of proof under which that reasoning may be supposed to labour. Let it suffice that the doctrine of a future state was believed by the whole Gentile world. This, we say, is a fact which cannot be accounted for on Christian principles otherwise than as an express appointment of Providence. For to suppose that a principle of such powerful influence on the conduct and the happiness of rational beings should have been thus universally diffused, without any provision in the counsels of Supreme Wisdom for the production of such an effect, and without any providential design as to the consequences resulting from it: this would evince a mode of thinking on the subject of the divine attributes, for which a patron or an advocate can be found only in the school of Epicurus.

And I think it will appear, after mature consideration, that we have good reason to admit the probability of certain means having been thus employed by God, which have not been distinctly unfolded in the Mosaic writings. We have already examined the consequences which might have been expected to flow from the insertion in those writings of any explicit declarations relative to the condition of men after death. We have endeavoured to illustrate, in the omission of such declarations, an instance of the wisdom with which the earlier dispensations of religion were adapted to promote the final success of the Gospel. And may not the same consequences be contemplated as the probable result

of conveying in those records a full description of the various methods which God may have employed for the purpose of establishing a belief of this doctrine in the minds of men? Had the accounts we possess relative to this point been more particular and copious, would not this, in its influence upon that people, for whose exclusive use the Mosaic records were primarily designed, have been nearly tantamount to a direct promise and a positive assurance?

We will now proceed to investigate the causes which may have operated to produce in the minds of mankind in general the belief of a future retribution: in which inquiry we do not, however, calculate upon that deficiency of evidence which it was the design of the foregoing observations to supply.

I. “ And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Be-
“ cause thou hast done this, thou art cursed above
“ all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon
“ thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all
“ the days of thy life : and I will put enmity be-
“ tween thee and the woman, and between thy seed
“ and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou
“ shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said,
“ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy con-
“ ception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children ;
“ and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he
“ shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said,
“ Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy
“ wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I com-
“ manded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it ;
“ cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt
“ thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also

“ and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou
“ shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy
“ face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the
“ ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust
“ thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return^c.”

On the foregoing passage, we have to offer the following observations.

First, The denunciation on the serpent would be construed by our first parents into a promise to themselves of future triumph over their enemy, to be achieved by the posterity of the woman. The prospect thus afforded they would regard as given for their consolation under the miseries of their fallen state. With this prospect they would therefore associate the hope of a deliverance from the dreadful evil which they had now brought upon themselves. That evil being death, the notion of a deliverance must have been correspondent, and must have embraced in it the prospect of a rescue from mortality.

Secondly, Adam and Eve would regard themselves as the representatives, in this transaction, of all their future posterity. They could not but understand (for if they understood it not when the awful judgment was denounced, they would soon be taught by the event) that their descendants were comprehended together with themselves in the doom of returning to the dust. They would therefore view them as included alike in the promise of deliverance. The benefit they were taught to expect would not, in their contemplation, be limited to any portion of

^c Gen. iii. 14—19

mankind who might live either at the time of the victory over the serpent, or after it. For this would have been of slender avail for the consolation of those who were actually suffering under the consequences of the fall.

Thirdly, That the malediction of the serpent was thus designed to afford a hope of immortality for man, will further appear from considering the doom itself which was incurred by Adam and Eve. "The judgment," says Sherlock, "is awful and severe : the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception ; the man to sorrow and travail all the days of his life ; the ground is cursed for his sake ; and the end of the judgment is, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time, and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God : they must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I conceive there could have been no religion left in the world ; for a sense of religion without hope is a state of frenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praiseworthy^d." Such hope could not relate to the present life, because that would have been inconsistent with the nature of the penalty

^d Sherlock's Discourses on Prophecy. Disc. III. The whole of that prelate's remarks on this subject are highly deserving of attention.

which had been denounced; it must therefore have related to a future. To this view it may indeed be objected, that the dread of God's omnipotence and the fear of falling into a worse condition, would have supplied the operation of a religious motive. But a notion of religion like this, in which fear alone prevails to the total exclusion of hope and love, is wholly foreign to all those characters under which religion is described to us in Scripture. "There is mercy with thee," says the Psalmist, "*therefore* shalt thou be feared^e." We consider our conclusion then unshaken, that religion, under the circumstances immediately connected with the fall, could never have subsisted in the world without the support of a future state.

Fourthly, The penalty which had been threatened was not inflicted immediately after the transgression. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die^f." Here was an abatement of the divine severity, with which our first parents can hardly have failed to connect the hope of further mercy, and that in a way quite incompatible with the state of sublunary wretchedness on which they had just entered. The respite afforded them would be viewed in conjunction with the promise of a triumph over their adversary: and the continuance of life would naturally be regarded, as given with a probationary design, for the purpose of enabling them to become qualified for the benefits of the promised victory and deliverance.

II. Thus favourable to the expectation of a future state were the views unfolded to our first pa-

^e Psalm cxxx. 4.

^f Gen. ii. 17.

rents immediately after the fall. Soon after this time, there occurs in the sacred narrative a very important event, which yields the strongest confirmation to the argument which is here maintained.

Cain and Abel, having each presented an oblation to God, we are informed that the former rose up against the latter and slew him. The motive which instigated the murderer is thus explained: "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect^f." "Wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous^g." It is further to be observed, according to the writer to the Hebrews, that the faith of the one was the reason of his being accepted, and the want of it in the other the cause of his rejection. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain^h." Now faith must be understood to denote a disposition of mind actuated by a firm reliance on the divine blessing promised to obedience. Less than this cannot be adequate to the meaning of the term. It must have been under the influence of this sentiment that he had been able to perform an acceptable homage to his Maker.

What feelings, then, must have been excited in the bosoms of the first parents of mankind by this tragical occurrence? when they beheld their son carried off by a premature death, in consequence of an act, which was acceptable to God, which had been performed in submissive conformity to his will, and with a confident reliance on his protection and blessing. Nothing but the belief in a future state

^f Gen. iv, 4, 5.

^g 1 John iii. 12.

^h Heb. xi. 4.

could have placed the transaction in a light consistent with what they knew respecting the perfections of the Supreme Being. Had they viewed it apart from the prospect of retribution in another life, the dreadful calamity must have led to conclusions still more distressing than the event itself. It must have induced a conclusion, that a conformity to the will of God is of no avail towards conciliating his favour; that final destruction would be the probable consequence of devotion to his service; that God is *not* the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and that there is *no* reward for the righteous. On such a view of the subject, the fear and service of God must have been at an end: religion and virtue must have become totally extinct among men: wickedness and injustice must have obtained an universal dominion. That this result did not actually follow, can be explained only by supposing, that the belief in a future retribution was entertained by our first parents. On this subject the language of Tillotson is equally forcible and just, and the argument expressed in it seems to be irresistible. “If,” says he, “the immortality of the soul
“and a future state be not supposed and taken for
“granted in this story, this very passage is enough
“to cut the sinews and pluck up the roots of all
“religion. For if there were no rewards after this
“life, it were obvious for every man to argue from
“this story, that it was a dangerous thing to please
“Godⁱ.” Before we dismiss this topic, it is important to remark, that the considerations now

ⁱ Vol. iii. Sermon. CXXIII. folio. 1712.

stated, clearly indicative as they are of a future state, are found in connexion with the very first inflictionⁱ of death upon man. So early do we trace the operation of that gracious plan for our recovery from death, which the Gospel has revealed! The earliest case of mortality among our species is so recorded, that if it did not itself generate the belief in a future state, at least it supplies the clearest evidence that such belief must have been entertained at the time of its occurrence. The grace of God has supplied an antidote to the malady from the very commencement of its desolating ravages.

If it be said, that the foregoing considerations do not amount to any distinct revelation of a future state, this may be allowed. But it must, at the same time, be contended, that the transactions to which we have referred, are totally irreconcilable with the supposition that the prospect of that state was not afforded.

We therefore infer, that the hope and expectation of a future state was granted to our first parents, and that the extensive prevalence of that doctrine in subsequent times was derived from this primary communication. On this supposition, the cause and effect will appear duly proportioned to each other. And this mode of accounting for the universal reception of this doctrine must appear more reasonable, than that which supposes it to spring from the natural sense and reason of mankind. For if we calculate the powers of human reason from a cor-

ⁱ See Graves's *Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch*, part iii. Lect. IV.

rect knowledge of its unassisted performances, we shall have no warrant for supposing it capable of any such sublime discovery as the immortality and future responsibility of man.

Thus far our reasonings apply in common to the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, and to the later posterity of Adam. But before we come to the era of Noah, the second founder of the human race, another remarkable event presents itself with strong claims to our attention. This event must have been greatly adapted to strengthen the belief in a future state. It must, indeed, have been perfectly unaccountable to the minds of men in that age, if such belief was not entertained by them.

III. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him^k."

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him^l."

From the brief record and accompanying declarations contained in the foregoing passages, we are warranted in deducing some very important conclusions.

In the first place, it is not easy to furnish a consistent exposition of the term faith, as it is here employed, if we do not suppose it to embrace the

^k Genesis v. 24.

^l Hebrews xi. 5, 6.

the conviction of a future state. Enoch walked with God, because he believed that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Could he then have expected the reward of obedience in the present life? This supposition is hardly reconcilable with the knowledge and experience, both of which he must have had, of the malediction which had been pronounced on the human race. It is equally irreconcilable with the malediction which had been pronounced upon the earth: since that must have conveyed an implied assurance, that the rewards of obedience were not, according to the intention of him who uttered the condemnatory sentence, to be of a terrestrial nature. “*Cursed is the ground* for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of “it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles “shall it bring forth to thee^m.” We therefore conclude, that the obedience of Enoch was stimulated by the prospect, not of a present, but of a future retribution.

But secondly, if such were the faith of Enoch, it must also have been the general faith of the age in which he lived. It must, for the reasons already alleged in application to him, have been the faith of all who believed that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Besides, both he and his contemporaries must have derived the knowledge of a future state from a common source of instruction. For Enoch was, during nearly the whole of his earthly period, contemporary with Adam: by whom, as we have seen, a future state must have been be-

^m Gen. iii. 17, 18.

lieved. Now Adam would naturally be the religious instructor of his children and posterity. We therefore conclude, that the doctrine of a future state was, in Enoch's time, a current and generally received doctrine of the religion then prevailing in the world.

In saying this, I shall not be understood to mean, that it was embraced by the rest of mankind with equal sincerity, or with the same practical influence. We have reason to believe that the wickedness of man had, in the days of Enoch, risen to a prodigious height. This will appear probable from the character he sustained, as a preacher of repentance; and from the tenor of his prophetic denunciationsⁿ, which seem to bear witness to an extreme corruption and obduracy in those to whom he was sent. The probability is increased when we reflect, that the period of his translation had witnessed the commencement of that generation respecting whom it is said, "God saw that the wickedness of man
" was great in the earth, and that every imagination
" of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually^o." Such being the case, the doctrine of a

ⁿ Jude 14, 15.

^o Gen. vi. 5. See a sermon of Dr. Clagett's on the translation of Enoch; from which I also extract the following words: "The
" world, though it was yet in its youth and vigour, was grown old
" enough for men to forget their Creator, and to abandon themselves, for the most part, to a voluptuous and dissolute life: and
" that this is no uncertain conjecture, appears from hence, that
" Enoch was translated but 69 years before Noah was born, in
" whose time mankind was grown to such an intolerable degree
" of licentiousness, that God sent the flood to sweep all away but

future state cannot have been generally cherished among them with much regard. It must still, however, have been a doctrine of the religion generally received and professed. If Enoch's faith in a future state was more firm and vigorous than that of others, the distinction may justly be regarded as a favour vouchsafed by God to the superior sanctity of his life : since an entire devotion to God's service is not only a requisite qualification for the reception of religious truth, but also a condition on which the knowledge of such truth is promised^p. The indulgence of sin darkens the spiritual frame of man^q. Where there is not a willingness to obey, the proper foundation of a religious faith is wanting : and human depravity will ever recoil from the entertainment of doctrines, which thwart the evil propensities of the heart, and disturb their gratification by unwelcome prospects of retribution and justice. And if, on the other hand, in his contemporaries, this faith was languid and wavering, or even ex-

" eight persons. Now it is not to be thought, that the world was " overspread with such monstrous vices all of a sudden, but that " after the manner of all human degeneracy, corruption of man- " ners, and of principles too, came on by degrees, and conse- " quently that in Enoch's time, who was translated little less than " a thousand years after the creation, there was a very great de- " cay of piety and virtue every where," &c.

^p " If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine " whether it be of God." John vii. 17. Δωρεα ἡ διδασκαλία τῆς θεοσεβείας· χάρις δὲ ἡ πίστις. ΠΟΙΟΥΝΤΕΣ γὰρ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ θέλημα ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΜΕΝ. Clem. Alex. I. 7.

^q Ἐπισκοτοῦσιν αἱ ἀσεβείαι πρὸς τὸ μὴ δυνασθαι ὁρᾶν τὸν Θεόν. Theoph. ad Autol, I. 2. Ἡ μοχθηρία διαστρεφεί και διαφθείρει τὴν διανοίαν. Arist. Eth. ad Nicom. lib. vi.

tinct, this also would naturally result from the predominance of those dispositions which are designated by the apostle "an evil heart of unbelief^r." But as a professed principle of religion, it seems reasonable to suppose, that he held it only in common with the rest of the world: as, indeed, in every age of God's church, there have been multitudes maintaining a public profession of religion, over whom its motives and sanctions have had little power in regulating the internal movements of the soul.

But though we should admit, that the general corruption of mankind in Enoch's time may have induced a practical disbelief of a future state; that this doctrine had become, in many of his contemporaries, a dormant principle; and that by others it had been avowedly rejected: still the doctrine itself must have gained augmented evidence, and have been armed with a more awakening conviction, from the supernatural manner of that patriarch's removal out of this world.

There are only two ways in which the design of Enoch's translation can justly be viewed. It must either have been limited to the benefit of that individual, or else it must have had an extended regard to the general welfare of mankind.

The former view is subject to very considerable objections. For, in the first place, we are not warranted in supposing that a miraculous interposition of Providence would take place, without important reasons for suspending the ordinary course of its

^r Heb. iii. 12.

proceedings. And yet, if we think that the reward of personal obedience was the only end contemplated in this appointment, it will appear, that this end might have been fully attained without any departure from that established and general law, by which the wisdom of God hath deferred to a future life the reward of virtue. The joys of immortality would certainly have been Enoch's portion, even though he, like other faithful servants of God in all ages, had passed through the gates of death into the celestial paradise: and these joys would have far outweighed the pangs and struggles of the dying hour. The pains of death would have been to him the less severe by reason of his innocent conscience and his undoubting faith: and, certainly, the omnipotence of God might, in the felicities of heaven, have more than counterbalanced those sufferings of temporal death from which he was thus exempted.

Secondly, Let us regard those general principles by which the divine proceedings are regulated in the infliction of death on our fallen race. We can discover in Enoch nothing, which, consistently with these principles, could furnish a ground of exemption from the common doom. Great, indeed, and exalted must that piety have been, which was honoured by such a splendid testimony of the divine approbation. But a general law had passed, which subjected all men to the temporal dominion of death^s: and this law, if we regard the principle on

^s " Publica totius generis humani sententia mortem naturæ debitum pronunciamus. Hoc stipulata est Dei vox, hoc spondit " omne quod nascitur." Tertullianus de Anima, c. 50. So strong-

which it was founded, applied to Enoch as well as to others. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned^t." To triumph over death is a privilege annexed by the divine mercy to faith and obedience: but the most transcendent heights of virtue to which man can rise, are nowhere permitted to hope for the enjoyment of the triumph without first enduring the sting. Enoch, in common with his brethren, participated in the defilement of a sinful nature. His obedience, though more sincere than that of others, would still fall far short of that perfect and undeviating conformity to the will of God, which alone could qualify him to be exempted from the operation of the general law.

The circumstances connected with the removal of Enoch and Elijah to a better world, were particularly adapted, and the more so by the rarity of their occurrence, to engage the notice and admiration of the world. It cannot be imagined that they would have been selected as the subjects of so remarkable a distinction, had they not been fitted, by an eminent sincerity of faith and integrity of life, to be thus held forth to their contemporaries and posterity. It may be, they pleased God and wrought righteousness beyond any who lived in their times. Or, if

ly does this writer insist upon the principle thus laid down in its application to our present subject, that he draws from it a very wild and extravagant inference. "*Translatus est Enoch et Helias, nec mors eorum reperta est, dilata scilicet. Ceterum morituri reservantur, ut Antichristum sanguine suo extinguant.*" Ibid.

^t Rom. v. 12.

their piety did not surpass that of all other men in their respective generations, we may reasonably believe that it was, from the circumstances of their situation, more conspicuous than that of others: and thus, the extraordinary manner of their departure out of this world would be the more exemplary, and the more subservient to general edification. But because they were thus distinguished, that they must therefore have surpassed in goodness all on whom the general sentence of mortality was allowed to take effect: this is an inference wholly unwarrantable. There is no ground for attributing to Elijah, who was taken up alive into heaven, a degree of sanctity superior to that of John the Baptist, who was beheaded in prison; and to whom, by reason of the resemblance in the virtues and characters of the two prophets, the name of the former is scripturally applied. Enoch walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death. Others also have walked with God and have been distinguished objects of his favour; but *they* have been selected to seal the faith with their blood, and to glorify God by enduring the agonies of martyrdom. Now concerning these last, we are taught by the word of infallible truth, that it was the tendency of their afflictions to work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory^u.

It was not then properly, or chiefly, with a design of rewarding the personal righteousness of Enoch, that he was translated, while in the body, into the company of celestial spirits; but it was

^u 2 Cor. iv. 17.

done with a view to the general instruction and interests of mankind. Agreeably to this view, he appears to be correctly described in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, as “ an example of repentance to all generations^x.” His case, and that of the martyr, are alike the appointments of a wise and merciful Providence, and may be reasonably considered as having been ordained with the same design ; namely, that of promoting the reign of godliness upon earth and of furthering the salvation of men. The one is chosen as a signal instance, for the general instruction and encouragement, of the divine approbation afforded to a virtuous life : the other is appointed, by the sufferance of death and torture, to yield an attestation to the truth of that faith which is the way of sanctification and eternal bliss. Both, we conceive, are properly to be viewed in connexion with the provisions of Divine Wisdom for the general welfare of the human race, and not with any restricted application to the qualities of individuals.

The present life is not the appointed season for the reward of virtue. Hence then we have reason to believe, that, had the design of Providence in the translation of Enoch been limited to his individual case, he, after the manner of other men, would have been admitted to his reward after his day of trial had been terminated by death. This, indeed, generally speaking, seems almost necessary in order to complete and perfect the appointed warfare of faith : since the approach of death is the severest trial which humanity has to sustain ; an hour which

^x Eccclus. xliv. 16.

calls forth the utmost exertion of our virtues, and puts most fully to the test our love of God and resignation to his will. “*Virtus nunquam nisi morte finitur,*” says Lactantius, “*quoniam et in morte suscipienda summum ejus officium est*.”^y

We therefore conclude, that the translation of Enoch was intended to afford to mankind a conviction that there is another world after this, and to strengthen the belief in a future retribution, at a time when religion stood in need of every support which it could obtain.

This conviction it was well adapted to establish. For, on the one hand, low as mankind may have been sunk in folly and depravity, they could never entertain so absurd a notion of the retributive justice of God, as to suppose, that it would be limited in its operation to a solitary case. And again, with regard to the mode of its operation, they could not find, either in those principles of true religion which still lingered among them, or in their own experience and observation, any sanction for believing, that the divine justice would manifest itself in rewarding the piety of all good men after the manner of Enoch’s reward. The only justifiable inference then would be, that man was destined for another life; and that an exception had been made from the general law for the sake of giving to the world a manifest ground of conviction that he was so.

Such are the arguments in favour of a future state arising from the scriptural records of the ante-

^y Div. Inst. vii. 10.

diluvian world. Hence we would infer, that this doctrine must have been the general belief of mankind before the flood. If the doctrine itself were not gathered from the transactions which have been brought under consideration, it must at least be allowed, that the views of those transactions which must necessarily have occurred to the minds of men, could never, on the supposition of any religion whatever existing among them, be reconciled with a disbelief of it. The belief is therefore implied in these transactions, if the doctrine itself be not proved by them. The doctrine thus entertained would be conveyed to Noah, the second father of mankind, and by him would be handed down to his posterity. Hence, we conceive, originated the wide diffusion of a doctrine, which in later ages spread itself so extensively among the various families of mankind, that scarcely a nation can be found among whom it was not entertained.

It must not however be forgotten, as we have already hinted, that in order to the propagation of this important truth, peculiar methods may have been employed by the Supreme Wisdom, of which no information has been conveyed to us. Of such possible methods there is one which, with a view to the general illustration of this remark, we will briefly notice.

That the dead have sometimes been restored to life, is an undoubted truth of revelation. While we acknowledge the purposes contemplated in these supernatural acts of divine power to be agreeable to that supreme and perfect wisdom by which they were ordained, why should it be thought unworthy

of the same wisdom, to permit that the departed soul, after quitting its fleshly tabernacle, should occasionally hold communication with men? Thus may have been afforded a sensible proof of future existence, together with an instruction, founded on experience, respecting the final issue attendant upon the conduct of men in their probationary state.

Reflect on the general belief in such communications which has pervaded every region of the inhabited world: and surely we may, without indulging an unreasonable credulity, allow it to be possible, that even the vulgar tales of popular superstition may have had their first foundation in reality and fact. Without such an admission, the existence of fiction and imposture with relation to such narratives is hardly capable of a rational explanation. It is thus we argue with regard to other instances of forgery. Pretended miracles and pretended prophecies are justly regarded as affording their evidence, that some miracles have been actually performed, and that some prophecies are authentic and divine. Impostures and cheats are commonly considered as imitations of something real². And with

² Και τουτο δε δοκει μοι ὡς περ ἐπὶ παντῶν δεῖν παρατιθεῖναι, ὅτι ὅπου τι χεῖρον προσποιουμενον εἶναι ὁμογενες τῷ κρεῖττονι, ἐκεῖ παντὶς ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντιοῦ ἐστὶ τι κρεῖττον· οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ γῆν ἐπιτελούντων, ὅτι παντὶς ἀνάγκη εἶναι καὶ ἀπὸ θείας ἐνεργείας ἐν τῇ βίῳ γινομενα. Origenes contra Celsum, ii. 51. So also the general principle is laid down by bishop Law: though the particular application of it to this subject militates against the peculiar doctrine maintained by that prelate respecting the soul. "Not to insist upon the numberless traditions of supernatural appearances, and the common belief of them all over the world; which notion can hardly be supposed to have arisen at first without foundation, though num-

good reason : because we cannot conceive, by what inlet the very notion on which the imposture is founded can have gained its first admission into the mind, unless it had been introduced by an antecedent reality. The pretensions of the necromantic art are of very ancient date, and yield a strong presumption of such reality: for on what ground can we imagine those pretensions to have been established, unless the minds of men had been previously familiarized to the conception of an intercourse with departed spirits? And again, how could the conception itself have existed in the mind, unless it had been primarily derived from reality and truth? It deserves consideration whether the petition of the rich man in the parable may not be considered as indicating a traditionary evidence of that, for the possibility of which we contend. “I pray thee therefore, father, “that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house : “for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto “them, lest they also come into this place of torment^a.” Now if we suppose such an intercourse to have been afforded by Providence to the earlier generations of mankind, this of itself will go far towards explaining the universality of that belief of which we are investigating the origin.

To have passed over this topic in silence would

“berless impostures (*which yet are ever imitations of something “real, and almost a natural consequence of it*) have indeed rendered all reports of that kind, for these many ages, very suspicious.” *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, p. 76. ed. 1765. See also *Gray’s Key to the Old Testament and Apocrypha* on 2 Macc. p. 680. ed. 1822.

^a Luke xvi. 27, 28.

have been hardly consistent with a proper deference to those many writers of distinguished name, by whom the greatest stress has been laid upon it as a clear proof of the immortality of the soul^b. It will readily occur, that if such communications were afforded under the dim obscurity belonging to the early periods of revelation, they must, agreeably to the foregoing view, be less needful under a dispensation which has brought life and immortality to light. Lastly, it is to be remembered, that these remarks are not introduced for the purpose of contending, as matter of fact, for the actual employment of this specific mode of instruction; but merely as an illustration of the general possibility, that certain methods of teaching a future state may have been employed, of which no notice has been conveyed to us.

To the supposition of such possibility the silence of Scripture is no valid objection. For had the Pentateuch contained any narratives or details of this character, the information thus afforded might have had an influence and effect on the minds of the Israelites similar to those, which, as we have endeavoured to shew, would have resulted from the premature introduction of those promises which peculiarly and exclusively belong to the evangelical covenant. They would then have been provided in the book of their Law with a satisfactory assurance, little short of a covenant promise, on which to establish the hope of immortal life: having this, they would probably have been disposed to look no

^b See the Supplementary Remarks.

further, and thus the Gospel would have been treated with neglect and disdain. Whereas, the writings of Moses, framed as they are with such a striking reserve in regard to this most interesting of all subjects, wore upon the face of them the strongest characteristic feature of an imperfect and progressive scheme, destined to receive addition and completion when the fulness of the time should come. Thus were they well adapted to prepare the minds of men for an ulterior declaration of mercy, and for embracing with gratitude the offer of life and immortality which the Gospel explicitly reveals.

But whatever may be thought of the foregoing reasoning, we still retain the undisputed fact, that the doctrine of a future state has been found interwoven with every variety of character belonging to the religious systems of the Gentile world: of the whole world, I should have said, but for the alleged exception of which we are trying the validity. Such a very extensive prevalence cannot, on Christian or rational principles, be otherwise explained, than as originating in the providential appointment of God, and in those methods of instruction which his wisdom may have chosen to employ. One general ground for this inference has been already stated. But the conclusion will gain additional evidence, if we will only consider the various sources from which this doctrine may possibly have been derived. There are, if I mistake not, but two with which we are at present concerned. Some will contend that it was a discovery of reason; others,

of revelation^c. It will be our business then to examine and adjust their conflicting pretensions. If in the issue it shall appear that those of the former are plainly untenable, revelation must then be allowed to vindicate its just prerogative of being considered the only admissible source of its derivation.

The question then immediately before us is, Whether the doctrine of future rewards and punishments can justly be regarded as a discovery of human reason?

Now if the resurrection of the body be viewed as constituting a part of this doctrine, then the question is at once decided: since those who most delight in magnifying the natural endowments of man, have never asserted the resurrection to be one of those truths which lie within their grasp^d.

Let the doctrine, however, be viewed as discon-

^c A third supposition is that of priestcraft or state-policy. Thus Bayle expresses it in the following passage; in which, however, the present inequalities of Providence are greatly overstated: "It is evident enough, that in this life good actions do not lead to temporal happiness, and that bad ones are the most common and surest means of raising one's fortune: to prevent men therefore from plunging themselves into vice, and to lead them to virtue, it would have been necessary to propose to them punishments and rewards after this life. *This is the craft, which free-thinkers impute to those whom they pretend to have been the first inventors of religion.*" Bayle's Dictionary, Art. Spinoza. Rem. E. But this is plainly foreign to our present argument, in which the truth of Scripture is supposed.

^d "As to a resurrection, it was ever looked upon [by the philosophers] as an article incredible and impossible." Ellis's Inquiry, whence cometh Wisdom and Understanding to Man, p. 542.

nected with this adjunct : which, nevertheless, according to the Christian scheme, essentially adheres to it. We will, then, contemplate the spiritual part of our frame as alone subject to the joys and miseries of future existence : and now, viewing the doctrine in this restricted shape, we are to inquire, whether the knowledge of it could have been obtained through the medium of rational investigation.

Here the first point which calls for examination is, whether reason, by any exertion of its native and unassisted energies, could have discovered in the human soul a *capacity* of future reward and punishment. In order to this, it must first be proved, that the soul is capable of existing after the dissolution of the gross corporeal integument with which we now find it to be united. But the possibility of this separate existence seems, according to the more prevailing opinion, to be wholly inadmissible, unless there be first established a conviction of its immateriality.

Now we contend, that the immateriality of the soul cannot possibly be deduced from any knowledge that we possess respecting it ; from any observations that we are capable of making ; or from any considerations which we are competent to frame. In proof of this proposition, I will exhibit a brief summary of the reasoning pursued by an excellent

“ The resurrection of the body is what no force of human wisdom could have discovered.” *Id.* Knowledge of Divine Things, p. 261. ed. 1811. See also the language of Celsus quoted by Origen, v. 14. where it is spoken of as a thing both contrary to the will, and exceeding the power, of God.

writer, who has treated this important subject in a forcible and convincing manner^e.

“ There can no reason be assigned why man, if
 “ you regard him in the unassisted exercise of his
 “ natural powers, should imagine himself to be a
 “ compounded being. He is conscious, indeed, of
 “ thoughts and emotions arising within himself:
 “ but why should he not suppose these to be occa-
 “ sioned by the peculiar temperament and organic
 “ structure of his body? Why should he recur to a
 “ separate and distinct principle in explanation of
 “ their origin? The spiritual and corporeal parts of
 “ our nature are, so far as we may judge from our
 “ present condition, inseparable: they never act
 “ asunder: they would therefore never occur to him
 “ as distinct objects of contemplation. But let it
 “ be supposed that he was capable of framing to
 “ himself certain abstracted arguments to prove,
 “ that reasoning and volition are the operations of
 “ an invisible and incomprehensible substance with-
 “ in him; yet one sound sleep would for ever de-
 “ stroy such a notion. For he would then perceive,
 “ that when the body is at rest, these operations are
 “ at rest also. Nay, the body breathes and is in
 “ motion, when the other part is in a state of death,
 “ when all its ideas and impressions are quite ob-
 “ literated. Again, it is waked with the body; and
 “ its perception is at all times but one act, and the
 “ act of the whole man. Nor could he ever form
 “ the least conception, how spirit can govern or act

^e Dr. Ellis. See his *Knowledge of Divine Things*, p. 383. et seqq.

“ upon matter, nor how spirit and matter can be vitally united together.

“ By what clue of abstracted reasoning must he search for demonstrations by which to judge of immateriality? How is he to discover the essence, operations, and acts, of substances distinct from body? How shall he obtain a discernment of aerial subtle spirits and intelligences? He has no guide but his senses, nor can he possibly believe what contradicts them: every thing that he sees, or feels, or hears, produces an impression repugnant to the notion of immateriality.

“ To this question a short answer may suffice: the whole is an impossibility. An uninstructed person can have no inlet or conveyance of knowledge but by sensation, and nothing is evident to the senses but matter: he therefore never could produce immateriality out of matter. Nothing can be made out of materials but what such materials afford. You cannot by any internal operations or powers elicit the notion of spirituality from that which is altogether corporeal.

“ Before a man could any way infer, that the instrument of thought must necessarily be immaterial, he must know what are the essential attributes of body and spirit: he must clearly understand in what motion, action, life, self-activity, cogitation, intellection, volition, internal energy, indivisibility, and extension, consist; as also, what are the modes and accidents of a substance. He must then discover the principle and root of life and cogitation, so as to distinguish between what is essentially vital and intellectual, and what is

“ not: he must ascertain the true and only cause
 “ of thought, so as to be satisfied that it cannot pro-
 “ ceed from any combination of matter: he must
 “ be able to reconcile immateriality and substanti-
 “ ality together: in fine, he must become acquaint-
 “ ed with numberless other abstract ideas, before he
 “ can have any adequate conception of the soul.
 “ And, when all this is done, he will still be unable
 “ to form a judgment respecting its immateriality.
 “ You may say with confidence: No mechanism,
 “ matter, or motion, however modified, can produce
 “ life or thought; therefore thinking is a proof of
 “ an immaterial soul. But if we believe Mr. Locke^f,
 “ the proposition on which this conclusion depends,
 “ is unsupported by due evidence. Nor is it any
 “ contradiction to suppose, that the first eternal
 “ thinking being or omnipotent spirit should, if he
 “ pleased, give to certain systems of created sense-
 “ less matter, put together as he thinks fit, some
 “ degrees of sense, perception, and thought.

“ If you define the soul to be a thinking being,
 “ this will serve to distinguish it from other bodies,
 “ but will not prove it to be immaterial^g. You can-
 “ not prove the impossibility of thought and exten-
 “ sion subsisting in the same thing: for you cannot,

^f “ Essay on Human Understanding, b. iv. c. 3. §. 6.”

^g So it was argued by Tertullian for the purpose of proving the corporeity of the soul: “ Quum animæ corpus adserimus *proprie* *qualitatis et sui generis*: jam hæc conditio proprietatis de ceteris accidentibus corpulentiae præjudicavit, ut hæc adesse, quæ corpus ostendamus, sed et ipsa *sui generis pro corporis proprietate*; aut etsi non adsint, hoc esse proprietatis, *non adesse corpori animæ quæ corporibus et ceteris adsint.*” De Anima, c. 9.

“ on the other hand, conceive how any thing but
“ impulse of body can move body, how thought and
“ will can give a determination to matter, or how
“ an immaterial soul can move a lifeless and sense-
“ less body.

“ They who have exercised their thoughts most
“ intensely on this matter have been forced to ac-
“ knowledge, that our faculties are incapable of ar-
“ riving at any demonstrative certainty respecting
“ the immateriality of the soul^h. It seems to be a
“ point beyond the reach of our knowledge. He
“ who will give himself the trouble of considering
“ the matter fully, and of looking impartially into
“ the dark and intricate part of each hypothesis,
“ will scarcely find his reason competent to any
“ fixed determination for or against the soul’s im-
“ materiality. On which soever side he views it,
“ whether as an unextended substance, or as a
“ thinking extended matter, the difficulty of con-
“ ceiving either, while either is alone in his thoughts,
“ will continually drive him to the contrary side.
“ Both opinions are to us inexplicable and beyond
“ our comprehension.”

Such is the essential difficulty which obstructs the proof of the soul’s immateriality: which, in the general apprehension of mankind, will be esteemed a necessary basis on which to establish the possibility of its separate existence. But should it even be granted, that this point is ascertainable by man under the light of nature; he has still, in the process of unassisted reason, a further difficulty, and one of equal magni-

^h “ Locke’s Essay, ut supra.”

tude, to struggle with, before he can establish the proof of its immortality as a consequence of the former. Respecting which also, I will insert the substance of the reasoning employed by the writer to whom I have just referred. “Whether it can be solidly
 “proved from reason, ought to be doubted; since
 “hitherto it has not been done. Nor is it possi-
 “ble for nature to prove more than this: Though
 “the body perish, there is no actual necessity that
 “soul perish also. But no uninstructed person,
 “from any observation he could make on the death
 “either of brutes or of men, could have the least
 “ground to imagine a separate existence of any
 “part of them. He sees life extinguished, the whole
 “man perish, and all operations cease: and thence
 “to argue that some part of him survives, lives, and
 “operates, would be a most absurd and vain in-
 “ference. Let it be granted that man, by the light
 “of nature, has discovered within himself a be-
 “ing separate from body: yet how could he distin-
 “guish between his own soul and that of other
 “animals? His proofs of immateriality in favour
 “of himself would equally apply to them. And
 “therefore, as he sees both men and brutes fall
 “into corruption after death, his most natural con-
 “clusion would be, that death puts an end to the
 “existence of bothⁱ.”

But the notion of a substance strictly immaterial is confessedly attended with considerable difficulty of apprehension^k. The disciple of Reason might

ⁱ Ellis's Knowledge, &c. pp. 388, 390.

^k “Mens nullo corpore: quod intelligi, quale sit, vix potest.”
 Cic. Acad. Quæst. iv. 39. See the last chapter of Paley's Evidences.

therefore, after examining the nature of the soul, possibly come to a conclusion that it was material. In this case a different path of demonstration must have been followed in order to the proof of its immortality: and a difficulty, greatly augmented, would occur, in the attempt to gain a conviction, that one material substance was exempted from the common fate which subjected all others to dissolution and decay. The materiality of the soul was held by many of the ancient philosophers, the Epicureans, for instance, and the Stoics: but they maintained also that which seems to be a necessary consequence of this doctrine, namely, that it would cease to exist. It was held also by some of the early Christian writers¹: but their opinions respecting its future existence were framed agreeably to this tenet. Here was consistency in both cases. But to imagine that unassisted reason should

¹ Tertullian and Arnobius. Of these, Tertullian maintains that its immortality can be known only by revelation from God. *De Anima*, c. 1. Arnobius says, that the soul is by nature mortal, and that its exemption from death is owing solely to the sustaining act of God. *Adv. Gen.* ii. 14, 30. et seqq. Tatian is reckoned by Warburton, but I think with insufficient evidence, among those who held the materiality of the soul. *Div. Leg.* b. iii. §. 4. vol. iii. p. 158. If he did, he likewise was consistent, since he maintained that the souls of the wicked become extinct at the death of the body, and return to life with it at the resurrection; while those of the good are sustained after death by the divine power. This, at least, appears to be his meaning, which is stated with some little perplexity. *Cont. Græc.* c. 21, 24. Justin Martyr also, and Theophilus of Antioch, did not believe the *natural* and *essential* immortality of the soul. The statement of these various opinions may help to illustrate the difficulty, or rather impossibility, the existence of which is here contended for.

conduct man to a belief that the soul was at the same time both corporeal and imperishable, is an absurdity at which the judgment of every candid person must revolt.

The following reasoning from the admirable writer whom we have lately quoted seems perfectly irresistible. “The divine power and goodness are the only stability of things. By them were all created beings brought into existence, and by them do they enjoy a continuance of it. Whether therefore they shall be annihilated, or retain a permanence through all eternity, must depend wholly on the will of God: and as to what he will do, that can be learned only from revelation¹.” It seems impossible indeed to maintain the immortality of the soul as a truth of rational discovery, unless we deny at the same time the power of the Deity to cause its extinction. For if the Deity have that power, we can have no assurance, except what is derived from his own communications, that he will not employ it.

“Scholars may reason,” says Sherlock, “of the nature of the soul and the condition of it when separated from the body; but the common hopes of nature receive no support from any such inquiries^m.” Such are our grounds for maintaining, that the immortality of the soul is a truth not to be gathered from any observation of its natural and inherent qualities, nor from any reasonings that we are able to frame respecting them.

¹ Ellis's Inquiry, &c. p. 542.

^m Disc. II. p. 61. vol. i. Oxford, 1812.

But the necessity of future rewards and punishments (which obviously imply the future existence of the soul) is often insisted upon, as a truth deducible by natural reason from the moral attributes and moral government of the Deity. The validity of this inference must therefore be examined: in order to which we will take a previous view of the argument through which it is obtained, as we find it stated in the words of a writer by whom, among numberless others, that argument is employed.

“ Religion establishing a Providence, the rewarder of virtue, and the punisher of vice, men naturally expect to find the constant and univocal marks of such an administration. But the history of mankind, nay even of every one’s own neighbourhood, would soon inform the most indiligent observer, that the affairs of men wear a face of great irregularity: the scene, that ever and anon presents itself, being of distressed virtue, and prosperous wickedness; which unavoidably brings the embarrassed religionist to the necessity of giving up his belief, or finding out the solution of these untoward appearances. His first reflection might perhaps be with the poetⁿ:

“ ‘ Omnia rebar
‘ Consilio firmata Dei; qui lege moveri
‘ Sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,—
‘ Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi
‘ Adspicerem, lætosque diu florere nocentes,
‘ Vexarique pios, rursus LABEFACTA CADEBAT
‘ RELIGIO.’ ”

ⁿ “ Claudian.”

“ But, on second thoughts, Reason, that, from the
 “ admirable frame and harmony of the material
 “ universe, taught him that there must needs be a
 “ superintending Providence, to influence that order
 “ which all its parts preserve, for the sake of the
 “ Whole, in their continued revolutions, would soon
 “ instruct him in the absurdity of supposing, that
 “ the same care did not extend to man, a creature
 “ of a far nobler nature than the most considerable
 “ of inanimate beings. And therefore human af-
 “ fairs not being dispensed, at present, agreeably to
 “ that superintendence, he must conclude, that man
 “ shall exist after death, and be brought to a future
 “ reckoning in another life, where all accounts will
 “ be set even, and all the present obscurities and
 “ perplexities in the ways of Providence unfolded
 “ and explained. From hence Religion acquires re-
 “ sistless force and splendour; and rises on a solid
 “ and unshaken basis^o.”

To the same effect observes this writer in another place: “ When it came to be seen, that God was
 “ *not always* a Rewarder and a Punisher *here*, men
 “ necessarily concluded, from his moral attributes,
 “ that he would be so, *hereafter*: and consequently,
 “ that this life was but a small portion of the hu-
 “ man duration^p.”

Again: “ It is by the *moral attributes*, we learn,
 “ that man was made for *happiness*: and that God’s
 “ dispensation to us *here* is but *part* of a general

^o Warburton’s *Divine Legation*, book i. sect. 2. vol. i. p. 218.

^p Id. *ibid.* book v. Append. vol. v. p. 227.

“ system : This naturally extends our views to, and
“ terminates our knowledge in, *Futurity*^q.”

Let us now try the solidity of this firm and unshaken basis, and examine whether it possess a strength and firmness sufficient to support the weight of structure which is raised upon it. If I mistake not, it will prove in the result a different basis from that which the apostle requires : “ Other foundation
“ can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus
“ Christ^r.”

It is necessary, however, to premise, that by the moral attributes of God, no other attributes are here to be understood than those of *justice* and *goodness*. This is all that is here assumed as the basis of proof: it is all that is insisted upon by this distinguished prelate as necessary to the establishment of a future retribution, in opposition to Bolingbroke, who endeavours to infer the falsehood of that doctrine from the denial of those attributes^s : lastly, it is all that the champion of human reason can equitably demand as the groundwork of demonstration. For it is plain (as will be seen hereafter) that any further knowledge respecting the moral attributes of the Deity must have been unattainable without revelation.

To proceed. When, among those promiscuous dispensations which now characterize the providential government of the world, wickedness is beheld

^q Warburton's *Divine Legation*, book ii. Append. vol. ii. p. 218.

^r 1 Cor. iii. 11.

^s See a few pages immediately following the last reference to Warburton.

to flourish prosperous and triumphant to the end of life ; then, if the moral attributes of God be firmly believed, reason has doubtless a strong ground for calculating on a future retribution. Thus far the conclusion is inevitable : but how far does it extend ? Certainly no farther than to establish the prospect of a future punishment to the wicked. But how the reason of man, wholly unenlightened from above, can establish on such considerations the proof of a future reward, is quite inexplicable. In order to the completion of this proof, it cannot employ any principles but such as revelation hath assured us to be false. Can reason discover in man any pretensions of merit as the foundation of hope in a future life ? Can it convey to man any assurance that his virtue is entitled to claim a reward from the justice of God ? Reason never can have taught a principle like this, since the principle itself is false. A future state of reward for the righteous is the free gift of God obtained for mankind by the sacrifice of Christ. If then our natural faculties could never discover the ground on which a state of future happiness is offered to mankind ; (and it is plain that they could not ;) then neither could they have discovered the certainty of that state itself. While redemption was a mystery, eternal life must, to the unassisted mind of man, have been so likewise.

The degrees of wickedness prevailing in this world are indeed different. Natural reason might therefore, from contemplating the moral attributes of God together with the inequality of his present dispensations, derive a just expectation, that the pe-

nalties of sin hereafter would differ according to its differing gradations here. This consideration would warrant an inference respecting the certainty of future punishments and the equitable distribution of them; but it would avail no further. For all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death. In many things we all offend. Our best obedience is but very partial and imperfect. And yet the voice of revelation declares, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all^t.” This may seem a stern declaration. Yet Reason must needs acquiesce in it: since it cannot be denied, that every transgression of the law, whether great or small, equally sets at nought the authority of the lawgiver^u, who is also the dispenser of rewards and punishments. Thus impossible is it, that man, on any true principles, could reason himself into a belief that he was qualified for any reward from his Maker on the terms of *justice*. And as to *goodness*, that, considered in itself, does not extend its regard beyond the innocent and unoffending. The hope then of transgressors, with regard to a future life, must be established on another attribute which revelation only can discover. They must contemplate their Maker as a *merciful* God, and *ready to pardon*.

The light of nature can afford no warrant for a hope that God will be merciful to man in the award

^t James ii. 10.

^u Το γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μεγάλαις παρανομίαις ἰσοδυνατὸν ἐστὶ δι’ ἑκάτερου γὰρ ὁ νόμος ὁμοίως ὑπερηφανεῖται. Josephus de Maccabæis, c. 5.

of a future life. If the contrary be asserted, how can you explain the different conditions of sinful men and of apostate angels^x? To the former an offer of pardon is made: but the latter are reserved in chains of everlasting darkness. Reason and nature, it is contended, might supply arguments sufficiently conclusive for the forgiveness of the one: why are not those arguments equally conclusive in regard to the other? In the latter application of them they are manifestly false. They must, then, be so in their application to the former. The salvation of man, depending as it does solely upon God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, could be known only by those discoveries which he may have been pleased to make, and not by any speculations which we are competent to frame. We therefore conclude, in the words of a great divine, that “natural religion can neither “give us any certain clear security of a future life, “nor means to attain it.”

Such is the “firm and unshaken basis” which natural religion affords for the establishment of our hopes respecting a future life. Let every man take heed that he buildeth not thereon.

But while we are thus confuting the pretensions of human reason on general and abstract principles, we have, if I mistake not, the more satisfactory evidence of historical testimony to warrant the conclusion we desire to establish.

^x See Ellis's Knowledge, &c. p. 422. et seqq.

^y Abp. King's Sermon on the Fall of Man, p. 81. Camb. 1739. See also Conybeare's Def. of Rev. Religion, p. 116. ed. 1732.

We are informed by Cicero, that Pherecydes was the earliest philosopher upon record who taught the immortality of the soul^z. That is to say, he was the earliest who taught it as a philosophical doctrine^a: since it is plain, even by the declaration of Cicero himself, that it had been universally^b entertained in the belief of mankind, from the very infancy of our species^c. This doctrine was afterwards strenu-

^z Tusc. Disp. I. 16.

^a This explanation of the words of Cicero is agreeable to Brucker, though the observation of that learned writer applies primarily to Thales, who is by some considered as the earliest philosophical teacher of this doctrine. It will be seen however by the following quotation to be equally applicable to Pherecydes. "Animam esse immortalem, primum dixisse Thaletem asseruit Chœrilus poeta. Nec dubium est, Thaletem dogma per omnem antiquitatem celeberrimum et inter Ægyptios sacrum ex Ægypto retulisse, Græciæque non tam intulisse primum, quam adjecisse systemati philosophico, quod immortalitatem animæ postulabat. Unde frustra disceptari putamus, an Thales vel Pherecydes primus fuerit, qui inter Græcos immortalitatem animæ docuerit? Ante utrumque enim inter Græcos dogma hoc a barbaris, Thrace Orpheo, et ex Ægypto allatum viguisse, theogoniæ fidem faciunt, quæ illud involvunt. Ab his edoctus philosophorum uterque nobilissimam doctrinam servaverunt, et de ea philosophati sunt, Pherecydes in Syro insula, Thales Mileti in Ionia." Hist. Phil. vol. i. p. 475. See the Supplementary Remarks.

^b Tusc. Disp. I. 16. "Permanere animos arbitramur consensu omnium nationum." So also, c. 13. the universal belief of this doctrine compared to that respecting the existence of a God.

^c Ibid. I. 12. "Auctoribus quidem ad istam sententiam quam vis obtineri, uti optimis possumus: quod in omnibus causis et debet et solet valere plurimum: et primum quidem omni anti-quitate; quæ quo propius aberat ab ortu et divina progenie, hoc melius ea fortasse, quæ erant vera, cernebat. Itaque unum illud erat insitum prisceis illis, quos Cascos appellat Ennius, esse in

ously maintained by Pythagoras, the disciple of Phecydes, and thus became a professed tenet of the Pythagorean school. But, he adds, it was the general practice of those early sages to assign no reasons for the doctrines which they taught^d. Here then is a plain declaration from a competent authority, that the universal reception of this doctrine among mankind was far more ancient than any reasonings which have been advanced in its support.

What follows is more especially remarkable. Having related that Plato made himself thoroughly acquainted with the system of Pythagoras, and adopted his opinion respecting the soul, Cicero proceeds to inform us, that this last named philosopher was the first who *adduced reasons* in proof of its immortality^e. Now the immortality of the soul forming an essential part of the doctrine of a future state; (as must have been the case with those to whom the idea of a bodily resurrection was wholly unknown;) that doctrine could never subsist without it. Hence then we discern the lateness of the period, at which the first effort was made to demonstrate upon rational principles, that which some maintain to have been an original discovery of reason: but

“morte sensum, neque excessu vitæ sic deleri hominem, ut funditus interiret.”

^d Ibid. I. 17. *“Rationem illi sententiæ suæ non fere redderant, nisi quid erat numeris aut descriptionibus explicandum.”*

^e Ibid. I. 17. *“Platonem ferunt, ut Pythagoreos cognosceret, in Italiam venisse, et didicisse Pythagorea omnia, primumque de animorum æternitate non solum sensisse idem, quod Pythagoram, sed rationes etiam attulisse.”*

which in fact had subsisted in the universal and implicit belief of mankind for ages before any such attempt was made.

A just and safe criterion of the powers of reason has thus presented itself. Its competence to the discovery of this important truth may now be estimated, not by any abstract measures and calculations of its strength, but by its actual performances: of what it can do, we may judge by what it has done.

Plato was not only the first who endeavoured to prove the immortality of the soul: he is also regarded as the most distinguished patron of this doctrine of which pagan philosophy can boast. By so great a master of reason and language, we may be assured that the subject would be treated with every advantage which it could derive from the brightest splendour of eloquence and the keenest talents for disputation. Thus far the trial will be favourable to those who vindicate the dignity of human reason: in another respect it will be equally so to the cause of truth. For this great philosopher having led the way in exploring the certainty of a future state by the clue of demonstration; it must be plain that, in such a case, the efforts of reason having no bias or assistance from any anterior or external source, the degree of their success must afford the safest guide to an estimate of its capacity.

With a view to the decision of this question, our attention will naturally be directed to that beautiful production^f, which its author has professedly and

^f The Phædon.

almost exclusively dedicated to the proof of the soul's immortality. Let us then proceed to a brief examination of its merits.

If you desire the chaste and elegant graces of Athenian composition; if you would indulge the flow of tenderness over a deeply pathetic scene; if you would admire the talents of a writer in selecting and arranging the circumstances of a story, so as to give to his discourse the most imposing effect: of such pleasures the *Phædon* of Plato is eminently fruitful. But if you seek for substantial usefulness and truth; if you demand the grounds of conviction on a matter of supreme interest; if you want a solid foundation for your hope beyond the grave: you must go to other sources for the satisfaction you require. Of this celebrated production it may be truly said, that, viewed as an argumentative discourse, its predominating ingredients consist of bad metaphysics and wretched quibbling. Throughout the whole of it, little is offered which furnishes any reasonable ground for a belief in the separate existence of the soul. As to the few topics selected, and the arguments framed upon them, for that purpose, so remote are they from the grasp of common apprehensions, that they can never, without flagrant absurdity, be regarded as having supplied an adequate cause of general conviction, or a probable basis for the widely prevailing expectations of mankind. Socrates is here represented as maintaining the eternal existence of the soul antecedent to its union with the body. He describes it also as destined, after death, to migrate into another animal body, and to possess an everlasting duration: the

proper notion of such migrations implying, according to the Platonic system, a successive repetition of them. From the necessity of these migrations, however, an exemption is made in favour of those souls, which, during their conjunction with the body, are purified by philosophy: these are at once exalted to perfect and endless felicity in the society of the gods, and never return to any corporeal dwelling. This purification is not, however, to be confounded with any sublime attainments in private and social virtue; but consists, according to the doctrine which Plato here maintains, in a philosophical resistance to the appetites of nature, together with the observance of a mental discipline framed agreeably to his own fanatical doctrine of ideas^g. On the other hand, those who, during their former life, have contracted the guilt of very enormous wickedness, are excluded from the benefit of such migrations; being reserved in a state of separate existence as the subjects of everlasting punishment and despair. The views chiefly insisted upon are wholly inconsistent with the retention of conscious identity throughout the various changes of condition to which the soul is introduced: though it must naturally occur to us, that if the surviving spirit be stripped of this attribute, the doctrine of immortality is nothing better

^g This purification is described, cc. 32, 33, 34. ed. Forster, and is plainly distinguished from the moral virtues; though we must believe, that in the contemplation of Plato, the latter are supposed to subsist in union with it. These virtues, *σωφροσύνη* and *δικαιοσύνη*, (under one or the other of which every species of moral rectitude is comprehended) are rewarded with an infinitely lower degree of happiness, c. 31.

than a bubble filled with the breath of a metaphysician^h. The future happiness or misery of the soul is so accounted for, as to appear determined by physical tendenciesⁱ rather than by the moral government of a righteous judge. We grant indeed, that a judgment is at one time asserted, and a moral retribution is described^k: we are however to recollect, that in

^h So it is represented by an adversary to this doctrine :

“ Nam si tantopere est animi mutata potestas,

“ Omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum :

“ Non, ut opinor, id ab letho jam longiter errat.”

Lucretius, iii. 673.

To the same effect are the following remarks of Athenæus: the design of which is, to illustrate the slender claim of Plato to the glory with which the common opinion of mankind has invested his name in regard to the immortality of the soul, and the real mischief accruing from the views of that doctrine, which he maintained under the pretence of demonstrating its truth: *Περι δε των εν τοις διαλογοις αυτου λελεγμενων, τι αν και λεγοι τις; 'Η μεν γαρ ψυχη ή διαπλαιοτομενη αθανατος ήπ' αυτου, και κατα την απολυσιν χωριζομενη του σωματος, παρα πρωτῃ ειρηται 'Ομηρῳ' οὗτος γαρ ειπεν, ως ή του Πατροκλου ψυχη*

αιδοσδε κατηλθεν, .

‘Ον ποτμον γοωσα, λιπουσ' αδροτητα και ήβην.

Ει δ' ουν, και Πλατωνος, φησειεν τις, ειναι ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ' ουχ ὁρω, τιν' εσχηκαμεν απ' αυτου ωφελειαν. Εαν γαρ και συγχωρηση τις, μεθιστασθαι τας των τετελευτηκοτων ψυχας εις αλλας φυσεις, και προς τον μετεωροτερον και καθαρωτερον ανερχεσθαι τοπον, ατε κουφοτητος μετεχουσας, τι πλεον ήμιν; 'ΩΝ ΓΑΡ ΜΗΤ' ΑΝΑΜΝΗΣΙΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΟΥ ΠΟΤΕ ΗΜΕΝ, ΜΗΤ' ΑΙΣΘΗΣΙΣ ΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΣΥΝΟΛΟΝ ΗΜΕΝ, ΤΙΣ ΧΑΡΙΣ ΤΑΥΤΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑΣ;” Deipnosop. xi. 117. ed. Schweighaeuser.

ⁱ Thus, the readmission of the soul into another body, under the influence of the habits contracted during the former life, is described after the following manner: *ὥστε ταχὺ ΠΙΠΤΕΙΝ εις αλλο σωμα, και ὥσπερ ΣΠΕΙΡΟΜΕΝΗ ΕΜΦΥΕΣΘΑΙ.* c. 33. See also c. 30.

^k C. 62.

this case, the alleged grounds of belief are traditional¹, and arise not from the abstract operations of that faculty, the extent of whose powers we are at present considering. But let us take a distinct view of some of the leading arguments and principles which occur in this treatise. “The senses, the wants, the passions, the diseases, and other affections, of the body, interrupt and embarrass the exercise of the mental powers. Now, the more the soul is abstracted from this corporeal influence, the better it performs those contemplative functions which are peculiar and appropriate to its nature. It will therefore perform these functions best when wholly separated from the body by death^m.” Again:

¹ Ὡς ἐγὼ ὑπο τινος ΠΕΠΤΕΜΑΙ. c. 58. These words occur at the beginning of the narrative in which the passage referred to is contained. Forster proposes to read πεπεισμαι; but the variation is perfectly immaterial.

^m C. 9—12. There is, it must be owned, something specious in this. We cannot however, consistently with the true principles of revelation, attach any considerable value to it. For these principles teach us to expect, that after the present mortal frame shall have been clothed with immortality at the resurrection, the soul will possess an everlasting duration in *conjunction* with the body: whereas the Platonic argument conveys the notion of a *separation* from it, as most agreeable to the nature, and best suited to the liberty and happiness of the soul. Cicero, though not for the purpose of contradicting the inference of Plato, has given a very different representation of the same topic; which is however, abstractedly considered, equally plausible: “Animorum est ea vis, eaque natura, ut vigeant vigilantes, nullo adventicio pulsu, sed suo motu, incredibili quadam celeritate. Hi cum sustinentur membris, et corpore, et sensibus, omnia cernunt, cogitant, sentiunt. Cum autem hæc subtracta sunt, desertusque animus languore corporis, tum agitur ipse per sese.

“ Substances are of two kinds: they are either com-
 “ pounded and visible, or uncompounded and invis-
 “ ble. Liability to perish belongs only to the former
 “ class; but the soul is of the latter: therefore it is
 “ imperishable. The soul, as far as we can ascertain
 “ its qualities, appears to be of an unchangeable na-
 “ ture, exempt from all perturbation, except that
 “ which arises from its union with the body and the
 “ exercise of its functions on sensible objects. It is the
 “ office of the soul to rule the body, and of the body
 “ to obey the soul: the former of which is the attri-
 “ bute of a divine essence, the latter of a perishable
 “ being. We cannot then suppose that the soul, pos-
 “ sessing as it does all these properties of an impe-
 “ rishable substance, will be immediately dissipated
 “ and sink into nonexistence at death. This will ap-
 “ pear the more unreasonable when you consider,
 “ that even the body, after the separation of the
 “ soul from it in death, has some degree of perma-
 “ nence before its parts are decomposed; and some
 “ of these parts, such as the bones, have even a long
 “ extended duration.” These may be considered as
 the very pith and essence of the treatise: they are
 the most plausible attempts at rational deduction
 which it contains. Some arguments of a different
 nature are however advanced with strong expres-
 sions of confidence in their value. The following
 is an instance: “ All things, to which there exists
 “ a contrary, are produced out of a state contrary
 “ to their present existence: thus the state of

“ *Itaque in eo et formæ versantur et actiones: et multa audiri,*
 “ *multa dici videntur.*” De Div. ii. 67.

“ C. 25—29.

“ being awake is produced out of sleep, and the latter again out of the former; so also, cold is a change from heat, and heat from cold. Now the contrary to death is life. Therefore, as death is produced out of life, so must life out of death. There must therefore be a revival of the animal being. The soul therefore must exist separately in order to the possibility of this revival^o.” To find an intellect ready to acquiesce in this kind of ratiocination would perhaps be no very easy task: it looks more like a metaphysical trap than a candid appeal to sobriety and reason. Such as it is, it can avail only in support of the Platonic transmigration, but has no relation to that kind of immortality of which we desire the proof^p. This transmigration is described in the following manner: “ The state of the soul after death will be determined by its occupations and pursuits during life. It will pass into the body of some animal whose natural propensities are similar to those which it indulged when united with the body. Thus the souls of men who have exercised the political virtues will pass into the bodies of bees, ants, wasps, or perhaps of other men; the tyrant will be changed into a wolf; the voluptuary will reappear in the

^o C. 15—17.

^p Tertullian thus exposes it: “ Et nos opponemus contrarietates nati et innati, visualitatis et cæcitatís, juventæ et senectæ, sapientiæ et insipientiæ. Nec tamen ideo innatum de nato provenire, quia contrarium ex contrario fiat. Nec visualitatem iterum ex cæcitate, quia de visualitate cæcitas accidat: nec juventam rursus de senecta reviviscere, quia ex juvenia senecta marcescat: nec insipientiam ex sapientia denuo obtendi, quia ex insipientia sapientia acuatur.” De Anima, c. 29.

“ form of an ass. But those souls only which have
 “ been purified by philosophy will be changed into
 “ a divine nature, and admitted among the gods ^q.”
 We will take one more example of the reasonings
 pursued in this dialogue. “ That which, being su-
 “ peradded to something else, produces an effect con-
 “ trary to the nature of that to which it is applied,
 “ can never be itself subject to an effect contrary to
 “ that which it thus produces. Now the soul, being
 “ superadded to an organized lifeless body, produces
 “ life. The soul therefore cannot be subject to death,
 “ for that is an effect contrary to life. In other
 “ words, it is immortal ^r.” This is advanced in all
 the form and pretension of irresistible proof. There is
 nothing throughout the whole disquisition on which
 greater stress is laid. Before we close our review,
 we should not omit to observe with regard to the
 prominent character in this discussion, that he is
 represented at one time influenced by the utmost
 weakness of vulgar superstition ^s; and at another, as
 having his mind bewildered by verbal ambiguities and
 frivolous distinctions of language, which are suited
 only to the exposure and ridicule of a child ^t. The
 concluding part of the dialogue displays a wild and

^q C. 29—32.

^r C. 52—55. The same argument is more intelligibly stated
 by Xenophon thus : “ I never can believe that the soul lives only
 “ when united to a mortal body, and dies when it is separated
 “ from it : for I observe, that even our mortal bodies, as long as
 “ the soul dwells in them, are thereby caused to live.” Ουτοι εγωγε, ω
 παιδες, ουδε τουτο ποποτε επεισθην, ως η ψυχη, εως μεν αν εν θνητῳ σωματι
 η, ζῃ· όταν δε τουτου απαλλαγη, τεθνηκεν. Ορω γαρ ὅτι και τα θνητα σω-
 ματα, ὅσον αν εν αυτοις χρονον η η ψυχη, ζωντα παρεχεται. Cyrop. viii.

^s C. 35.

^t C. 49, 50.

visionary theory respecting the structure of the earth, which is introduced for the purpose of describing those conditions and abodes which are separately appointed for disembodied souls.

On the whole, the scene to which you are introduced in this dialogue is deeply impressive and awful; and the conversation you hear in the person of Socrates commands the strongest interest in your feelings. You cannot but admire the great martyr of philosophy in his calm and dignified retreat from the present life; his virtue rising superior to the most appalling discouragements; his resolution unshaken by the rude assaults of power and malice, undaunted by the dark prison and the poisonous draught, unaffected by the violent dissolution of the most endearing ties, at a time when those ties must have been felt in the utmost force of tender emotion excited by the presence of those around him. You cannot withhold your respect, when, amidst so many disheartening circumstances, you observe him, with an unbroken spirit and an undisturbed serenity, inculcating on his companions a steadfast adherence to rectitude and a sense of the supreme importance of the soul. But all that he suggests is little available for the conviction of your understanding or the assurance of your hopes: and the best improvement which you can gather from it is, to feel the natural darkness of the human mind, to confess the want of divine illumination, and to be thankful to the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who, in raising Jesus from the dead, hath afforded to all men a proof of immortality, alike suited to the nature of their faculties and the satisfaction of their desires.

If it be said to the praise of philosophy, that the arguments we have now reviewed, such as they are, were sufficient to support the fortitude of Socrates in a trying hour, to produce an heroic display of intrepid courage, and a magnanimous contempt for death; this can by no means be admitted. For we have the utmost reason to believe, that the deep interest and lustre of the scene we have contemplated, may have been more indebted to the talent than to the fidelity of the painter; the obligation of truth being systematically excluded from the morality of Plato^u: and though the fortitude of Socrates were even great as it is represented, yet it sprung not from those considerations which are here ascribed to him^w. The reasonings we have examined are those of Plato, not of Socrates^x. Far

^u The justice of this charge cannot be questioned, if we consider the nature of the *double doctrine*, which was observed by Plato, and which is founded on the principle, *that public utility and truth are incompatible with each other, and that the former ought to be preferred as the object of those discourses which are intended for popular instruction*. The principle is thus laid down by Synesius, who, though a bishop, is much better authority in regard to Platonism than Christianity: ΝΟΤΣ ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΣ ΕΠΟΠΤΗΣ ΩΝ Τ' ΑΛΗΘΟΥΣ, ΣΤΓΧΩΡΕΙ ΤΗ ΧΡΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΨΕΤΔΕΣΘΑΙ. αναλαγον γαρ εστι φως προς αληθειαν, και ομμα προς δημον. 'Ηι ουν οφθαλμος εις κακον αν απολαυσειεν απληστου φωτος, και η τοις οφθαλμιοσι το σκοτος ωφελιμωτερον' ταυτη και το ΨΕΤΔΟΣ ΟΦΕΛΟΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΙΘΕΜΑΙ ΔΗΜΩ, και βλαβερων την αληθειαν τοις ουκ ισχυουσιν ενατενισαι προς την των οντων εναργειαν.—Δημψ γαρ δη και φιλοσοφια, τι προς αλληλα; ΤΗΝ ΜΕΝ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΝ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΙΩΝ ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΟΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΔΕΙ· ΤΟ ΔΕ ΠΛΗΘΟΣ 'ΕΤΕΡΑΣ 'ΕΞΕΩΣ ΔΕΙΤΑΙ. Ep. 105. For the conduct of Plato in regard to this principle see Warburton, Div. Leg. iii. §. 2. vol. iii. p. 21. et §. 3. p. 88.

^w See the Suppl. Rem.

^x "Ad theologiam Socratis naturalem merito referimus quoque

from being the reflections of a dying man, they are undeniably those of a mind at ease, indulging all the wantonness of philosophic leisure.

Our attention must not however be limited to the single treatise which we have just examined: the nature of our present design requiring a general statement of the evidence adduced by Plato in proof of a future state. There are other parts of his writings in which a different line of reasoning is pursued for this purpose. Thus, the following argument is^y particularly extolled by Cicero for the uncommon refinement and elegance of its texture: "Every soul is immortal. For that which is ever

"doctrinam de anima: de qua multa quidem pro Socraticis nobis
 "vendidit Plato.—Verum et *hic quoque Pythagorica cum So-*
 "*craticis mire commiscuit, et conturbavit omnia Plato.* Nam quæ
 "de præexistentia animarum, ideis, et amissa ante conjunctione
 "cum corpore scientia, in Phædone disputat, Italicæ scholæ decre-
 "ta sunt, non Socraticæ, quæ in his nugis non consensit." Bruck-
 er's Hist. Phil. vol. i. p. 563. That Plato was, on general sub-
 jects, guilty of falsifying the character and sayings of Socrates,
 appears from the testimony of Diogenes Laertius, in *vita Plat.* §. 35.
 et *Socratis*, ii. §. 45. as also from Athenæus. *L.* xi. cc. 113.
 et 116. The testimony of the latter is also express with regard
 to that particular dialogue which relates the death of Socrates:
 since Phædon, by whom the narrative of that event is delivered
 in the dialogue of Plato, is said to have declared, that he never
 either himself related, or heard from Socrates, the remarks
 which are under his name attributed by Plato to Socrates. *Ibid.*
 c. 113. (See the Suppl. Rem.) Diogenes Laertius informs us, that
 Socrates was one of four persons, under the names of whom Plato
 was accustomed to deliver *his own* sentiments. In *vita Plat.* §. 52.
 A learned and ingenious writer appears therefore to have made no
 inconsiderable mistake when he says, that "Plato's admired dia-
 "logues are but corrected transcripts of what passed in the aca-
 "demy." Blackwell's *Inq. into the Life and Writings of Homer.*

^y Tusc. Quæst. i. 23.

“ moving is immortal: whereas that which moves
 “ another thing, and is moved by another thing, has
 “ a cessation of life when it has a cessation of mo-
 “ tion. Wherefore, that only which moves itself,
 “ inasmuch as it cannot abandon itself, can never
 “ cease to move; but moreover this is the spring
 “ and beginning of motion to all other things which
 “ are moved. Now the beginning must be un-
 “ created: for every thing which is created must
 “ have sprung from the beginning, but the beginning
 “ itself from nothing. For if the beginning sprung
 “ from any thing, it would not be the beginning^z.
 “ And inasmuch as it is uncreated, it must also be
 “ imperishable. For if the beginning be destroyed,
 “ neither will itself be produced from any thing, nor
 “ any thing from it, since all things must take their
 “ rise from the beginning, We therefore conclude,
 “ that that which moves itself must be the be-
 “ ginning of motion. This can neither be liable to
 “ perish, nor can it have been created: otherwise

^z According to the present reading, “ it would not be *from* the
 “ beginning, ΕΞ αρχης:” a form of words to which, in combina-
 tion with what goes before, it is not easy to affix a meaning. The
 text is however manifestly depraved, as appears not only from its
 being unintelligible, but also from the translation of Cicero, which
 is perfectly coherent with the context, and which runs thus :
 “ Nec enim esset principium quod gigneretur aliunde.” We must
 therefore suppose the original to have stood thus : Εἰ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ
 ἀρχῆς γιγνέιτο, οὐκ ἂν ΑΡΧΗ γιγνέιτο. The occurrence of the words ἐξ
 ἀρχῆς so shortly before may naturally have led to the mistake in
 which the present depravation consists. The emendation is the
 more certain, because the writings of Cicero contain two different
 versions of this passage from Plato, (Tusc. Disp. ut sup. et Somn.
 Scip. viii.) which, though they vary in other minute particulars,
 agree together as to this point.

“ both all the heavens and all the earth would
 “ collapse into one motionless body, and could never
 “ again receive an impulse which might be to them
 “ the cause of motion ^a. Now since it has been
 “ made to appear, that that which is moved by itself
 “ is immortal, we need not fear to say that this
 “ very thing is the essence and reason of the soul.

^a The present reading is, *και μηποτε αυθις εχειν ΣΤΗΝΑΙ ὁθεν κινη-
 θεντα γενησεται*: that is, “and would never be able to regain a
 “ position from which they might be moved.” But here again the
 text is plainly vitiated by the repetition of *στηναι* after an in-
 terval of four words: that word giving to the passage a meaning
 which is contrary to the design of Plato and at variance with the
 translation of Cicero. The whole passage stands thus in the Bi-
 pont edition: *Πασα ψυχη, αθανατος, το γαρ αεικινητον, αθανατον το δ’
 αλλο κινουν, και ὑπ’ αλλου κινουμενον, παυλαν εχον κινήσεως, παυλαν εχει
 ζωης. μονον δη το αὐτο κινουν, ἄτε ουκ απολειπον ἑαυτο, ουποτε ληγει κινου-
 μενον, αλλα και τοις αλλοις ὅσα κινεῖται, τουτο πηγη και αρχη κινήσεως.
 αρχη δε, αγενητον. εξ αρχης γαρ αναγκη παν το γιγνομενον γιγενσθαι,
 αυτην δε μηδ’ εξ ἑνος. ει γαρ εκ του αρχη γιγνοιτο, ουκ αν εξ αρχης γιγνοιτο.
 επειδη δε αγενητον εστι, και αδιαφθορον αυτο αναγκη ειναι. αρχης γαρ δη
 απολομενης, ουτε αυτη ποτε εκ του, ουτε αλλο εξ εκεινης γενησεται· επιερ εξ
 αρχης δει τα παντα γιγενσθαι. οὕτω δη κινήσεως μεν αρχη, το αὐτο κινουν.
 τουτο δε ουτ’ απολλυσθαι ουτε γιγενσθαι δυνατον· η παντα τε ουρανον, πασαν
 τε γην συμπεσουσαν στήναι, και μηποτε αυθις εχειν στήναι ὁθεν κινήθεντα
 γενησεται. αθανατου δε πεφασμενου του ὑφ’ ἑαυτου κινουμενου, ψυχης ου-
 σιαν τε και λογον τουτο αυτο τις λεγων ουκ αισχυνεται. παν γαρ σωμα ὃ
 μεν ἐξωθεν το κινεῖσθαι, αψυχον· ὃ δὲ ἐνδοθεν αυτο εξ αὐτου, ἐμψυχον· ὡς ταυ-
 της ουσης φύσεως ψυχης. ει δ’ εστι τουτο οὕτως εχον, μη αλλο τι ειναι το
 αυτο αὐτο κινουν, η ψυχην· εξ αναγκης αγενητον τε και αθανατον ψυχη αν
 εἴη.* *Platonis Opp. Phædr. vol. x. p. 318.* I would only observe,
 with regard to the above reasoning, that it is nothing more than a
 contemptible sophism, effected by employing one term in a two-
 fold signification: the word *ΑΡΧΗ* being used to denote two dif-
 ferent things, namely, the beginning of motion in the corporeal
 frame of an individual, and the beginning of motion in the uni-
 verse. Thus the first spring of action in animal life is con-
 founded with the First Eternal Cause of all things.

“ For every bodily substance which derives its motion
 “ from an external cause is inanimate, or void of a
 “ soul ; and every bodily substance which is moved
 “ internally from itself is animate, or endued with a
 “ soul : for this self-moving power is the nature of
 “ the soul. And if this be the case, that the self-
 “ moving substance is nothing else than a soul, then
 “ the soul must needs be both uncreated and im-
 “ mortal.”

Here, we perceive, the essential attributes of divine perfection are ascribed to the souls of men : we may add, of brutes also ; for the professed opinions of Plato require that he should be so understood. Of such reasoning the merits cannot be better stated than in the language of Warburton ; who thus expresses a manly and proper indignation, not only at the argument itself, but also at the conduct of those modern theologians by whom it has been honoured with the suffrage of their approbation :
 “ It is so big with impiety and nonsense, that one
 “ would wonder how any Christian divine could
 “ have the indiscretion to recommend it as doing
 “ credit to ancient philosophy ; or to extol the in-
 “ ventors and espousers of it, as having delivered
 “ and entertained *very just, rational, and proper*
 “ *notions* concerning the immortality of the human
 “ soul^b.”

Perhaps the nearest approach to truth afforded us in the various disquisitions of Plato respecting the soul (if indeed so lame an effort may justly be described in such terms) is contained in his Republic. The following is a brief abstract of the reasoning

^b Div. Leg. iii. §. 3. p. 115.

there pursued : “ The destruction of every perish-
“ able substance is effected by some evil peculiar to
“ its nature, the evil which destroys it being the
“ same with that which depraves it : thus, wood is
“ destroyed by rottenness, and iron by rust. Now
“ the evil peculiar to the soul is vice : for it is this
“ which depraves it. But it is plain that vice does
“ not, by any direct operation of its own, destroy the
“ soul. The vice of injustice, for instance, will
“ never of itself cause the death of a man. It may
“ indeed provoke the vengeance of the law, and
“ death may follow : but this is an accidental, not a
“ physical and necessary consequence. The soul is
“ therefore distinguished from all perishable things
“ by this peculiarity ; that which causes its deprava-
“ tion does not also cause its destruction : it is there-
“ fore imperishable. You cannot say that the soul
“ is destroyed by a disease or death, for these are
“ not the peculiar evils of the soul : they cannot
“ deprave it, and therefore cannot destroy it. To
“ say the contrary, would be to contradict the uni-
“ versal principle of nature, which makes the deprava-
“ tion and destruction of things to spring from the
“ same cause. As therefore the soul is not de-
“ stroyed by any evil peculiar to itself, and it cannot
“ be destroyed by the evil of any thing else ; it must
“ be indestructible and immortal^c.” The separate
existence of the soul being thus established as the
necessary basis of a future retribution, the prospect
of that retribution is deduced in the following man-
ner. “ The actions and moral disposition of all men
“ are known to the gods : by them, therefore, the

^c Platonis Opp. vol. vii. p. 311—316.

“ virtuous will be loved, and the wicked hated.”
“ To the virtuous, their dispensations will therefore
“ be framed in that way which is best of all adapted
“ to promote their welfare. We ought therefore to
“ entertain this persuasion respecting the just man:
“ whether he labour under poverty, or disease, or
“ any thing else which is esteemed an evil, to him,
“ either during his life or after his death, the final
“ issue of things will be happy. For that man will
“ never be neglected by the gods, who will vigor-
“ ously endeavour to be just, and, by the sedulous
“ observance of virtue, to liken himself to God, as
“ much as it is possible for man to do so. And on
“ the other hand, the contrary fortune is what we
“ must contemplate as likely to be the portion of the
“ unjust man. So far then as the gods are con-
“ cerned, such must be the triumphant glories ap-
“ pointed for the just ^d.”

This, I believe, may be considered as the very best specimen of reasoning respecting a future state which the writings of Plato afford. Further we need not follow the speculations of this sublime genius. There is one general remark which applies to all his disquisitions on the soul. In the sober estimation of mankind they can be regarded as little better than nugatory. Arguments which prove too much are just equivalent to those which prove nothing. Yet such, if we go along with him to the full extent of his conclusions, are the tendency and the value of all the reasonings which Plato has advanced on this subject.

The proofs which in this case we require are

^d P. 319, 320.

those of a future state of reward for the virtuous, and of punishment for the wicked : and we wish this doctrine to be placed upon such a footing as may render an efficient support to virtue and happiness among men. Are these desires satisfied by the great philosopher ? Far from it. You are taught to believe the separate existence and immortality of the soul : but the process of reasoning, by which you are conducted to this inference, is as much available to prove the existence of the soul before you were born, as its survival after you are dead. Of these propositions the former is a flat contradiction to your own sense and experience. You therefore can place no confidence in the latter, because they are both deduced from the same views and principles. Again : you desire the proofs of a retribution suited to the character of a moral agent ; and you are answered by reasonings which hold equally good with regard to brutes, in whom the moral character does not exist. Hence a just objection attaches to the proofs of a principle which is made to extend so far beyond its reasonable limits. Such is the philosophical system of Plato. In all his dissertations on this subject, the doctrine of a future state is found to subsist in inseparable connection with the immortality of brutes, and the pre-existence of the soul.

So futile were the attempts of philosophy to demonstrate a truth of previous acquisition. Much reason then have we to deny its competence to the far more arduous task of original discovery. But to argue this point is in fact unnecessary. The confession of those ancient sages whose names are al-

leged in proof of the contrary, leads us at once to the position we maintain. The doctrine itself was insisted on by them, not as a discovery of reason or an instruction of nature, but as a truth obtained from traditional conveyance. Socrates himself, while confidently asserting the future existence of the soul and the retribution appointed for it, is represented by Plato as saying, "These things I believe, because "I have HEARD them;" and again with reference to the same subject, "By these TRADITIONS, or "REPORTS, I am firmly persuaded^e." Many similar confessions are to be found dispersed through the writings of that philosopher^f. Whatever indeed may

^e Gorgias. The original words will be found in the note immediately following.

^f A collection of these passages has been made by Bishop Law, in a note on his *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*. The substance of that note I will here present to the reader. "This" [*viz.* the use of traditional authority by the heathen philosophers] "appears to have always been the case in most of the best things "which they deliver on the most important subjects, as may be "easily discerned by the abrupt manner in which they commonly "retail such sentiments; by their seldom reasoning on them long "consistently; or being able to pursue their natural consequences: from whence methinks any indifferent person would "conclude, that they had never traced such out by their own reason, nor were the original discoverers of them; at least, I could "not help concluding so from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *tradition*, and some *sacred records* for them; and "appealing to what they have *heard* upon such subjects. I might "have set down numberless expressions, that confirm the observation, though I do not doubt but the same thing has been observed by many others: however, I shall point out some remarkable passages from Plato to this purpose. *Philebus*: Οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ κρείττονες ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκούντες ΤΑΥΤΗΝ ΦΗΜΗΝ ΠΑΡΕΔΟΣΑΝ. *Id. Epist. vii.* Πειθεσθαι δὲ οὕτως αἰεὶ χρὴ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΙΣ

be the lofty pretensions of modern infidelity in stating the prerogative of reason, it ought to be remembered, that these pretensions are advanced by persons enjoying the advantages of a light which they dishonour and disparage, but that they derive no countenance from the early teachers of the Gentile world, who, though not excluded from the remote influ-

“ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΊΕΡΟΙΣ ΛΟΓΟΙΣ· ΟΙ ΔΕ ΜΗΝΤΟΥΣΙΝ ΉΜΙΝ ΑΘΑΝΑ-
 “ΤΟΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ, δικαστας τε ισχειν, και τινειν τας μεγαistas
 “τιμωριας, οταν τις απαλλαχθη του σωματος. Gorgias : Ταυτ’ εστιν, ω
 “Καλλικλεις, α εγω ΑΚΗΚΟΩΣ πιστευω αληθη ειναι, και εκ τουτων των
 “λογων τοιονδε λογιζομαι συμβαινειν. ‘Ο θανατος κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Εγω μεν
 “ουν, ω Καλλικλεις, ΉΠΟ ΤΟΥΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΩΝ ΠΕΠΕΙΣΜΑΙ. Phæ-
 “do : ΠΑΛΑΙΟΣ ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΙΣ ‘Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΟΥΤΟΣ ού μεμνη-
 “μεθα, ως εισιν ενθενδε αφικομεναι [αί ψυχαι] και παλιν γε δευρο αφικ-
 “νουνται, και γιγνονται εκ των τεθνεωτων. Id. Ibid. ‘Α δε και ΛΕΓΕΤΑΙ
 “μεγιστα ωφελειν η βλαπτειν τον τελευτησαντα ευθυς εν αρχη της εκεισε
 “πορειας. ΛΕΓΕΤΑΙ δε ούτως, ως αρα τελευτησαντα εκαστον ο εκαστου
 “δαιμων οσπερ ζωντα ειληχει ούτος αγειν επιχειρει εις δη τινα τοπον, οί δει
 “τους συλλεγεντας διαδικασαμενους εις ήδου πορευεσθαι κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Πολ-
 “λοι δε εισι και θαυμαστοι της γης τοποι· και αυτη ουτε οια, ουτε οση ήπο
 “των περι γης ειωθωτων λεγειν, ως εγω ήπο τινος ΗΕΠΤΣΜΑΙ. Και ο Σιμ-
 “μιας, πως ταυτα, εφη, λεγεις, ω Σωκρατες; περι γαρ τοι της γης και αυ-
 “τος πολλα δε ακηκος κ. τ. λ. Apol. Socr. Ει δε αυ’ οιον αποδημησαι εστιν
 “ο θανατος ενθενδε εις αλλον τοπον, και αληθη εστι ΤΑ ΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΑ
 “κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Τατε γαρ αλλα ευδαιμονεστεροι εισιν οί εκει των ενθαδε και
 “ηδη τον λοιπον χρονον αθανatoi εισι, ειπερ γε ΤΑ ΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΑ αληθη
 “εστιν. Phædrus : ΑΚΟΗΝ Γ’ ΕΧΩ ΛΕΓΕΙΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΩΝ.
 “Το δ’ αληθες αυτοι ισασιν. ει δε τουτο ευροιμεν αυτοι, ΑΡΑ Γ’ ΑΝ ΕΘ’
 “ΗΜΩΝ ΜΕΛΟΙ ΤΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΩΝ ΔΟΞΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ. Id. in
 “Timæo : Εγω φρασω, παλαιον ΑΚΗΚΟΩΣ λογον, ου νεου ανδρος. Id. de
 “Rep. 10. fin. Και ούτος, ω Γλαυκων, ΜΥΘΟΣ ΕΣΩΘΗ και ουκ απωλετο.
 “Και ήμας αν σωσειεν, αν πειθωμεθα αυτη. From these few extracts
 “any one that can read Plato may judge, whether by his own
 “confession both he and his master Socrates did not borrow their
 “notions concerning a future state of rewards and punishments
 “somewhere.” Of the quotations thus adduced, by Law, I have

ence of that benefit, partook of it in very scanty measures and supplies. By them the natural darkness of the human mind is ingenuously acknowledged. Whatever valuable principles of divine knowledge they held, these they profess to have borrowed from instruction, but use no endeavours to set them off as the native production of their own minds.

“ It is false and groundless to suppose that the
 “ heathen world were utterly destitute of all the be-
 “ nefits accruing from revelation, and that they were
 “ indebted to the light of reason only for any va-
 “ luable knowledge they possessed respecting Divine
 “ matters. This is contrary to fact, to history, and
 “ to their own confession: a confession which in
 “ this case is surely deserving of credit, since it
 “ evinces the triumph of truth over that common
 “ vanity, which disposes men to arrogate to them-
 “ selves the praise of important discoveries. Gre-
 “ cian wisdom was the spoil of Egyptian and Ori-
 “ ental schools, where ancient truths had been wretch-
 “ edly mangled and defaced, and where the light of
 “ natural reason was too weak to restore them to
 “ their original holiness and purity. The philoso-
 “ phers of that country, in all their loftiest flights,
 “ raised themselves on borrowed pinions. The wisest
 “ of them never supposed that a doctrine like that
 “ of a future state was to be drawn out from the na-
 “ tive stores of the human mind. They therefore
 “ stayed not at home to consult their own reasonings,

taken the liberty of omitting one, which appears not so much to the point, and of giving another more fully from the text of Plato; and I have also added to them the insertion of a third.

“ but traversed the world^h and spent a great part “ of their lives in searching for masters and instructionⁱ.” Agreeable to this was the form of their earliest philosophy, which was not argumentative, but purely dogmatical: their doctrines claiming not the praise of sagacious investigation, but resting avowedly on the basis of tradition and previous instruction. So far were they from setting forth those doctrines as the discoveries of reason, that they pretended not even to offer reason in proof of their truth. In this cause may possibly have originated the ΑΥΤΟΣ ΕΦΑ of the Pythagoreans: which, though condemned by Cicero^k as an unbecoming deference of reason to authority, was perhaps occasioned by the candour, rather than the pride, of ancient philosophy^l.

BUT the pretensions of philosophy having in the present instance been unjustly set up to the disparagement of that source from which the belief of a future state was truly derived, the just honour of revelation seems to demand something more than a

^h “ Ultimas terras lustrasse Pythagoram, Democritum, Platonem, accepimus. *Ubi enim quid esset quod disci posset, eo veniendum judicaverunt.*” Cic. Tusc. Disp. iv. 19.

ⁱ Ellis's Knowledge of Divine Things.

^k De Nat. Deor. I. v. Jamblichus indeed pretends, that Pythagoras *did* give reasons for the doctrines which he taught. De Vita Pythag. §. 87, 88. But his testimony is of little value in contradiction to the general sense of antiquity; especially as he lived so many ages after the person whose life he writes, and his work contains many and manifest indications of contempt for truth.

^l See Dr. Graves's Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch, vol. ii. p. 341. Shuckford's Connection, Pref. to vol. i. and Warburton's Div. Leg. iii. §. 4. vol. iii. p. 177.

mere proof of the negative. These pretensions will be more fully exposed by computing historically the real influence which has resulted from philosophy in the views of this important subject, to which men have been conducted under its guidance. For this purpose, it will be desirable that we should take a general survey of the most remarkable opinions respecting the soul, which, before the promulgation of the Gospel, had obtained the sanction of philosophical authority: connecting with this survey of opinions a notice, of the principles from which they were deduced, and of the evidence which was offered in their support. This task we will therefore endeavour to perform: after first, however, claiming those allowances which are due to the scanty and uncertain records of early philosophy, and the inconsistency and contradiction which run through every period and division of it^m. That the doctrine of a future state is no human discovery, we have already seen. The cursory review on which we are about to enter will strengthen this conclusion, by establishing a contrary effect in actual connection with the alleged cause of its introduction. It will bring to light the gross corruptions which this doctrine underwent in the Gentile schools; and will make it fully manifest, that those corruptions are justly chargeable on the perverted exercise and vain speculations of that faculty, in which the doctrine itself is by some supposed to have originated.

^m “ Quoniam ratio illis non quadrabat, per ignorantiam rerum
“ divinarum, tam varii, tam incerti fuerunt (philosophi), sibique
“ sæpe contraria disserentes, ut quid sentirent, quid vellent, sta-
“ tuere ac dijudicare non possis.” Lact. Div. Inst. iii. 28.

The knowledge of a future state was obtained, as we have seen, by the ancient sages of Greece from tradition and instruction: the contrary opinion, by which it is regarded as the fruit of rational investigation, being peculiar to their modern admirers, but wholly disclaimed by themselves. It had been firmly established among mankind from the remotest antiquity to which the memory of the world extends, and had become diffused into all the varieties of religious faith, however discordant in other respects, which prevailed throughout the earth. Soon after the dawn of philosophy, it was adopted into the Grecian systems: but it was little beholden to the patronage it thus obtained. The early teachers of Grecian wisdom derived from very polluted fountains the greater part of their peculiar tenets: that is to say, chiefly from Egypt, the mother of abominations, and partly also from Phenicia, Chaldea, and the Persian magi ⁿ.

Before we describe the alterations it underwent in the process of discussion and inquiry, it will be right to give a brief outline of the form in which it was previously entertained.

The popular belief of early Greece respecting this great fundamental of religion may be gathered from that portion of its literature, which, being anterior to the age of philosophy, was therefore secure from its infection. In the very remote antiquity of that people, the current ideas of a future state appear to have been strongly tinctured with the prevailing sentiments of savage life, in which the notions of

ⁿ See the Supplementary Remarks.

rectitude are false, and those of its rewards debasing and gross: valour being confounded with virtue, and sensuality with happiness. Thus the felicity of the blessed was represented in the strains of Musæus to consist in perpetual festivity and drunkenness^o. A later age brings us to the father of epic poetry. By him, both the immortality of the soul and a moral retribution are decidedly acknowledged^p. But here also, these great primeval truths occur to us debased with so great an alloy of falsehood and folly, as scarcely to retain the slightest traces of their genuine beauty and usefulness. In the future state of Homer, the punishment of flagitious guilt is remarkably exemplified in various instances, conveying the most exquisite notions of hopeless labour, tormenting privation, and excruciating pain. The dispensation of rewards is not wholly excluded: but these are of a complexion so dismal, that the prospect could never avail to dissipate the horror of death or to fortify the purposes of virtue. They are also awarded according to that false estimate of morality which prefers splendour to rectitude, which lavishes admiration on the daring exploits of heroism, but discovers no respect for the peaceful and beneficent virtues. The only cases of the kind which we meet with,

^o Μουσaios δε τουτων νεανικωτερα τ' αγαθα, και ο υιος αυτου, παρα θεων διδασει τοις δικαιοις. Εις αδου γαρ αγαγοντες τῷ λογῷ και κατακλιναντες, και συμποσιον των οσιων κατασκευασαντες, εστεφανωμενους ποιουσι τον απαντα χρονον ηδη διαγειν μεθυοντας· ηγησαμενοι καλλιστον αρετης μισθον μεθην αιωνιον. Plato de Rep. ii. Op. vol. 6. p. 218. Common opinion has assigned to this bard a greater antiquity than Homer: Herodotus however intimates a different opinion, ii. 53.

^p Hom. Od. xi. xxiv. Il. iii. 278, 279.

are found in connection with those qualities which experience has discovered to be most conducive to the disturbance of mankind. These distinctions of favour consist, moreover, in comparative abatements of misery, rather than in any experience of positive delight. However varied in other respects may be the lot of departed spirits, one general shade of gloom and sorrow darkens the condition of them all⁹. To illustrate this by examples: The mighty hunter, whose prowess had been exerted in repressing the depredation of monsters, is permitted to indulge in meadows of asphodel the pleasures congenial to his former life; and the valour of the warrior is requited by swaying the sceptre of royalty over the inferior dead: but the latter is made to declare, that the degradation of mercenary servitude, and the hardships of penury in his former state of existence, would be gladly accepted in exchange for the honours and enjoyments of present dominion. We find indeed, in the inhabitants of Elysium, a state of real happiness, under a genial atmosphere and a smiling aspect of nature: but this is a portion to be envied rather than pursued, since it is not proposed to the general attainment of mankind, but represented as the pri-

⁹ Αἱ δ' ἄλλαι ψυχαὶ νεκρῶν κατατεθνεῖων

ἑστασαν ἀχνυμεναι, Εἰποντο δὲ κῆδε ἑκάστη.

Od. xi. 540.

Τίπτ' αὐτ', ὦ δυστήνε, λῖπων φάος ἡλίου,

Ἡλυθες, ὄφρα ἰδῆς νεκρῶς καὶ Ἀτερπεία Χῶρον.

Ib. 92.

So also Hesiod, *Εργ. καὶ Ἡμ.* 153.

Βῆσαν ἐς ἔργα ἑτάροισιν ἀνδράσι Κῆρυες Αἰδαο.

The general notion seems to be well expressed by Æschylus:

Σκοτὴ φάος ἰσομοῖρον. *Choeph.*

vilege of fortune, not the prize of virtue^r. Among the absurdities of this description we are particularly to remark the qualities assigned to the soul; which is at one time set forth under the notion of a subtle ethereal spirit^s, and at another represented as glutting its appetite with gross corporeal food^t, and flying with terror from a corporeal weapon^u. These are the striking features belonging to Homer's description of a future state. The poems of Hesiod, which in this case possess the same authority, are distinguished by a general concurrence of tone, though less full in the details they supply. If any additional circumstance ought to be specified, it is that which is afforded by the Hymns to which the name

^r Thus Menelaus is destined to this happy state, not on account of any virtues he had exercised, but because he was the husband of Helen :

Σοι δ' ου θεσφατον εστι, διστρεφες ω Μενελαε,
 Αργει εν ἵπποβοτῳ θανεειν και ποτμον επισπειν^α
 Αλλα σ' ες Ηλυσιον πεδιον και πειρατα γαιης
 Αθανατοι πεμφουσιν, (οθι ξανθος Ῥαδαμανθυς^β
 Τη περ ῥηιστη βιοτη πελει ανθρωποισιν^γ
 Ου νικητος, οντ' αρ χειμων πολυς, ουτε ποτ' ομβρος,
 Αλλ' αιει Ζεφυροιο λιγυπνειοντας αητας
 Ωκεανος ανησιν, αναψυχειν ανθρωπους^δ)
 ΟΥΝΕΚ' ΕΧΕΙΣ ἘΛΕΝΗΝ, ΚΑΙ ΣΦΙΝ ΓΑΜΒΡΟΣ ΔΙΟΣ ΕΣΣΙ.

Od. iv. 561.

Hesiod also describes the blessed islands in a manner similar to the Elysium of Homer: but here also the happiness of that region is not spoken of as the common hope of mankind, but the peculiar fortune of a race of heroes and demigods who had long ago been extinct. *Εργ. και Ἑμ.* 155—171.

^s Od. 203—221.

^t Ib. 94—97.

^u Ib. 48, 230.

of Homer is commonly affixed, and which, if they be not the productions of that poet, are generally supposed to claim an antiquity little short of his age. In these we meet with a slight intimation of a doctrine which was long retained in the popular theology of Greece ^x, that the blessedness of the separated soul would be greatly promoted by an initiation into the mysterious rites of Ceres ^y.

Such is the general character of this doctrine of early mythology : so far, at least, as it can be ascertained from the small portion of authentic evidence now extant. And this description may be esteemed tolerably correct : for though it were to be considered as the offspring of fancy rather than the transcript of real opinions ; yet it can hardly be doubted, that Homer, though he might be unfaithful in delineating the creed of his own age, was the parent and founder of that which was subsequently entertained ^z.

In this disguised and mutilated form the doctrine of a future state was found by the early teachers of Gentile wisdom. The sequel will evince, that in the hands of them and their successors it became still more distorted and disfigured ; gathering in the progress of disquisition a gradually increasing accumulation of error and folly, with a still more fatal influence on the morals and welfare of mankind.

^x Vide Plat. Phædon. c. 13.

^y Hymn. ad Cerer. ver. 485.

^z This latter opinion has the sanction of Herodotus, who says of Homer and Hesiod, Οὗτοι εἰσι οἱ ΠΟΙΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ θεογονίην Ἑλλήσι, (ii. 53.) The former supposition is espoused by Blackwell in his Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer.

In tracing the progressive deterioration of that which was bad from the beginning, the first remarkable step which occurs to us was, the annexing to the notion of the soul's immortality that of its pre-existence. Under the uncertain light of distant antiquity, it is not easy to follow up to its beginning the chain of erroneous principles and false deduction which led to the adoption of this foolish conceit.

That the human soul is a part of the Divine essence, appears to have been an ancient and prevailing tenet of philosophy: and the notion of its eternal preexistence was, according to one view of the subject, deduced from it ^a.

Another view supposes it to have been inferred from that favourite maxim of the atomical philosophy; "nothing can be made out of nothing." The soul being regarded as a substance distinct from matter and from all modifications and qualities of it, it could not either spring out of nothing, or out of any substance different from itself: all natural generations being only the various dispositions and modifications of substances previously existing ^b.

A third opinion is, that it originated in an unwillingness to admit that the soul was liable to extinction; since this liability would be esteemed a consequence of admitting that it was generated with the body ^c.

^a Warburton's Div. Leg. iii. §. 4. vol. iii. 150, et seqq.

^b Cudworth's Intellectual System, c. i. §. xxxi.

^c "Neither was there ever any of the ancients before Christianity, that held the soul's future permanency after death, who did not likewise assert its preexistence; they clearly perceiving, that if it were once granted that the soul was generated, it could never be proved but that it might be also corrupted." Cudworth's

For it would naturally occur to a speculative mind, that the future permanence of the soul lay open to this objection: as its existence commenced with the bodily life, it is reasonable to suppose that it will also terminate with that life. By the followers of Epicurus this objection was strongly urged, as a ground for treating with derision every sentiment which extended its regard beyond the grave^d. Those who venerate philosophy as the teacher of a future state ought here to be reminded, that the subject of their admiration is justly

Int. Sys. c. i. §. xxxi. So likewise Lactantius: “ Nam cum time-
 “ rent argumentum illud, quo colligitur necesse esse, ut occidant
 “ animæ cum corporibus, quia cum corporibus nascuntur, dixe-
 “ runt non nasci animas, sed insinuari potius in corpora, et de aliis
 “ in alia migrare. Non putaverunt aliter fieri posse, ut supersint
 “ animæ post corpora, nisi videantur fuisse ante corpora.” Div.
 Inst. iii. 18. So inveterate does this notion appear in the ancient
 philosophy, that Nemesius (who presents another incongruous and
 loathsome compound of Christianity and Platonism) offers us the
 following dilemma: “ If you say that the soul is generated with
 “ the body, you must admit, with Aristotle and the Stoics, that it
 “ is subject to death: if, on the contrary, you declare it to be an
 “ incorporeal essence, you must never admit that it was created
 “ with the body. If you make such admission, you convey to
 “ us the notion of a perishable and irrational soul.” De Nat.
 Hom. ii. p. 74. ed. Oxon. 1671.

^d “ Ergo dissolvi quoque convenit omnem animai
 “ Naturam, ceu fumus in altas aeris auras:
 “ Quandoquidem gigni pariter, pariterque videmus
 “ Crescere, et, ut docui, simul ævo fessa fatiscit.”

Lucr. iii. 456.

“ Quare etiam atque etiam nec originis esse putandum est
 “ Expertes animas, nec lethi lege solutas.”

Ibid. 686.

Τας δὲ ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ΛΥΕΣΘΑΙ ΑΜΑ ΤΟΙΣ ΣΩΜΑΣΙΝ, ΩΣΠΕΡ
 ΚΑΙ ΣΤΥΓΓΕΝΝΑΣΘΑΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ τίθεται (Επικουρος). Orig. Philos. xxii.

chargeable with the open denial of that doctrine, as well as with perverting its true principles. Nor will the attempt avail to separate the name and sanction of philosophy from these dangerous wanderings of the mind. For the philosophical character was always as readily acknowledged and as much respected by mankind in general, in those who contradicted, as in those who asserted the immortality of the soul^e: and we have reason to believe, that the Epicurean sect were more numerous than the adherents of any other ancient system of human instruction^f.

The Pythagorean and Platonic schools did not, however, according to their public doctrines, admit the extinction of the soul at death. We may here observe, that the reasoning which deduces the future destruction of the soul from its having been generated with the body, is properly confuted, by alleging the moral and responsible character of man as the marks, which, without implying the necessity of a previous existence, designate him as the proper subject of a future state. They, however, pursued a different course. In order to repel the inference, they denied the fact on which it proceeds, and strenuously maintained the past eternity of the soul.

Akin to this, we have to remark in the next place, the large comprehension which was given to this doctrine in regard to the class of subjects whom

^e “*In hac duntaxat contentione non minus autoritatis habuerunt qui contra hanc sententiam disserebant, Dicæarchus primo, deinde Democritus, postremo Epicurus.*” Lact. Div. Inst. vii. 8.

^f “*Quæritur sæpe, Cur tam multi sint Epicurei?*” Cic. de Fin. i. 7.

it embraced. The moral feeling and rational endowments of man are commonly thought to afford the most reasonable ground for the expectation of a state of existence different from the present, in which for the most part all things happen alike to all: and indeed a reasonable ground it is, if accompanied with a belief of the divine forgiveness and mercy. The future state of the ancient philosophers was not however limited by these considerations: it had a regard almost equally benign to the condition of men and that of brutes^s, and annexed the privilege of immortality impartially to both.

These principles being entertained, coherency of system would dictate a third, which forms a necessary consequence of them. This related to the number of souls existing in the universe: which number, it was contended, was the same from all eternity, and destined so to continue unchangeably without increase or diminution through every succession of future time^h.

Thus in proportion as the dignity of the soul was exalted, the attributes of the Divinity were circumscribed: the existence, at least, of the former being exempted from his control, while the introduction of a newly created soul was regarded as an effect beyond the reach of his power.

Those philosophical tenets which have hitherto

^s Παντα τα γινόμενα ἐμψυχα ὁμογενῇ δεῖ νομίζειν. Porphyrii Vita Pythag. §. 19. “Non mediocres viri, sed maximi et docti, Pythagoras et Empedocles, unam omnium animalium conditionem juris esse denunciant.” Cic. de Rep. iii. 11.

^h Οὐτ’ ἂν ποὺ ἐλαττοὺς γένοιτο [αἱ ψυχαί], μηδεμίας ἀπολλυμένης, οὐτε αὐ πλείους. Plato de Rep. Opp. vol. vii. p. 316.

come under our observation, may possibly appear to be tintured with the leaven of Egypt. On this point our acquaintance with the ancient doctrines of that country is too slight and dubious to warrant a decisive judgmentⁱ. They are however all of them embodied in the system of the metempsychosis, which was unquestionably a leading doctrine of Egyptian superstition^k: a superstition which indicated the lowest intellectual debasement, and offered the most disgusting violations to the moral sense and decency of mankind. So low did philosophy stoop when she obtained the first acquaintance with those absurdities to which she extended her countenance, and which, with solemn airs of gravity and wisdom^l, she dispensed among her followers. Her powers were not employed in the discovery of truths by which the nature of man is exalted and refined, but in vindicating errors by which it is degraded and disgraced.

But we must here discriminate between the Egyptian and the Grecian metempsychosis. The former would necessarily, in its general application, imply that the soul existed before the body: but it does not appear that this previous existence was, according to that system, supposed to have been eternal. This latter feature of absurdity was however comprehended in the Grecian modification of it, and may possibly have been peculiar to it as a

ⁱ Brucker observes on this subject: "Ad conjecturas omnia re-
"dire modeste fatemur." Hist. Phil. vol. i. p. 297.

^k Herod. ii. 123. Diod. Sic. i. 98.

^l The *σεμνοπρεπεια* of Pythagoras is particularly noted by Diog. Laërt. viii. §. 36.

distinction from the other^m: since it was by no means inconsistent with the genius of Greek philosophy to deteriorate, however originally bad, whatever doctrines it embraced.

The general doctrine of the soul's immortality had indeed been asserted by Thales and Pherecydes, at a period anterior to the introduction into Greece of that peculiar system which is known by the name of the metempsychosis. Of these, Thales appears by a residence in Egypt to have gained the best acquaintance he could with the follies of its superstition and the impostures of its priestcraftⁿ: his notions respecting the soul might therefore probably have been framed agreeably to these discoveries^o. In what peculiar manner the doctrine was taught by Pherecydes, cannot be ascertained in the present defect of creditable testimony^p. But it is highly probable that the principles maintained by both these early teachers in regard to the soul were the same, as to the particulars which have been specified, with those which were subsequently avowed by the Pythagoreans and Platonists. For it is important to observe, that the future state of

^m Warburton contends that it was. Div. Leg. iii. §. 4. p. 185.

ⁿ Ουδεις αυτου καθηγησατο, πλην οτ' εις Αιγυπτον ελθων τοις ιερευσι ΣΥΝΔΙΕΤΡΙΨΕΝ. Diog. Laërt. i. 27.

^o The following passage from Plutarch gives us reason to think that his notions of the soul were the same with those of Plato, of which an account is given, page Θαλης απεφηνατο πρωτος την ψυχην. φυσιν ΑΕΙΚΙΝΗΤΟΝ η ΑΥΤΟΚΙΝΗΤΟΝ. De Plac. Phil. iv. 2. Nemesius de Nat. Hom. c. ii. p. 41.

^p “Qua ratione animæ immortalitatem asseruerit Pherecydes, “veteres non explicant.” Brucker's Hist. Phil. vol. i. p. 989. See the Supplementary Remarks.

the ancient philosophy is no otherwise known to us than as embracing those peculiarities which we have noticed. Thus it was, at least, till the age of the Gospel: after which pagan philosophy soon discovered a disposition (in which it has been followed by modern infidelity) to appropriate the discoveries of revelation, and at the same time to shed its venom on the sacred source of knowledge to which it was indebted ^q. But previously to that time, wherever

^q “ If reason be so sharp-sighted, as to discover all things essential to natural religion and morality, (as so called,) how comes it to pass, that these later philosophers reached a much higher elevation, and wrote in so much diviner a strain, than their masters did, and excel Plato (who for so many ages was the deity of reason and virtue) as far as he did the most fabulous theologians who went before him, in their discourses on the Supreme Being, his attributes, creation, providence, nature, and the immortality of the soul, &c. ? They could not have it from Pythagoras or Plato, who had made no such clear discoveries ; nor had any rational or tolerable account till this time been given of them ; they were secrets to the heathens, till they began to study in the schools of Christians.—I may add, that this is the very case of modern infidelity. How comes it to pass, that their systems are more regular, and their deductions of virtue clearer ? Whence are those sublimer duties and notions, and principles more solid, and better established, than appear among the ancients ? Are they wiser than Socrates or Cicero ? is their capacity of mind greater, their study severer, or their knowledge more universal and extensive ? Certainly the very reverse : their art is inferior, but the materials they had to work upon were better, and therefore their sacrilege the more notorious. They learned these things in the word of God, and then disown their benefactor.” Ellis’s *Knowledge of Divine Things*. See the same work for the general proof and illustration of this remark, p. 38—50. The same truth, as it applies to modern infidelity, is stated and explained with remarkable clearness and force by Warburton : “ The ancients neither knew the origin

the immortality of the soul is philosophically delivered so as to include the notion of distinct personality ; there the eternal preexistence of souls both human and brutal, and the unchangeable number of them, are to be understood as forming a part of the doctrine thus designated^r. Nor is it ma-

“ of obligation, nor the consequence of obedience. REVELATION
 “ hath discovered these principles ; and we now wonder, that
 “ such prodigies of parts and knowledge could commit the gross
 “ absurdities which are to be found in their best discourses on
 “ morality. But yet this does not hinder us from falling into a
 “ greater and a worse delusion. For having of late seen several
 “ excellent systems of morals, delivered as the *principles of natu-*
 “ *ral religion*, which disclaim, or at least do not own, the aid of
 “ *revelation*, we are apt to think them, in good earnest, the dis-
 “ coveries of natural reason ; and so to regard the extent of its
 “ powers as an objection to the *necessity* of any further light.
 “ The objection is plausible ; but sure, there must be some mis-
 “ take at bottom ; and the great difference in point of excellence,
 “ between these *supposed* productions of mere reason, and those
 “ *real* ones of the most learned ancients, will increase our sus-
 “ picion. The truth is, these modern system-makers had aids,
 “ which as they do not acknowledge, so, I will believe, they did
 “ not perceive. These aids were the true principles of religion, de-
 “ livered by *revelation* : principles so early imbibed, and so clearly
 “ and evidently deduced, that they are now mistaken to be amongst
 “ our first and most natural ideas : but those who have studied
 “ antiquity know the matter to be far otherwise.” Divine Lega-
 “ tion, iii. §. 5. vol. iii. p. 213.

^r “ Nemo [philosophorum] vidit, quod est verissimum, et
 “ nasci animas, et non occidere.” Lact. Div. Inst. iii. 18. “ In-
 “ deed it is a thing very well known, that according to the sense
 “ of philosophers, these two things were always included to-
 “ gether in that one opinion of the soul’s immortality, namely, its
 “ pre-existence as well as its post-existence. Neither was there ever
 “ any of the ancients before Christianity, that held the soul’s future
 “ permanency after death, who did not likewise assert its pre-exist-

terial to determine, whether these peculiar views of Grecian philosophy were first framed in accommodation to the metempsychosis, and suggested by it^s; or whether that monstrous doctrine was incorporated into the philosophical system by reason of its aptitude to coalesce with such views previously enter-

“ence.—It is plain also, that this doctrine of the ancient atomists concerning the immateriality and immortality, the præ and post-existence of souls, was not confined by them to human souls only, but extended universally to all souls and lives whatsoever. They resolved that all souls and lives whatsoever, which now are in the world, ever were from the first beginning of it, and ever will be; that there will be no new ones produced which are not already, and have not always been, nor any of those which now are, destroyed.” Cudworth’s *Intell. Syst.* i. §. 31, 32. If it be necessary to qualify by any exception what is thus asserted, it is that which occurs in the *Timæus* of Plato: where it appears to be distinctly stated, (in direct contradiction to many other passages in his writings which positively declare the past eternity,) that the human soul was *created* in the way of composition out of preexisting substances, (*Oper.* vol. ix. p. 326.) after the manner in which he had already described the creation of the soul of the world. (p. 312.) Still, however, even in this form, you have the doctrine of a soul preexistent to the body, and coeval in existence with the creation, or rather construction, of the universe. We are to observe however, that Plutarch maintains this to be nothing more than a *seeming* contradiction to the general doctrine of Plato, and expresses great indignation that the latter should be supposed capable, in treating a subject to which he had particularly devoted his studies, of an inconsistency, which would have been disgraceful even in a drunken sophist. (*Περὶ τῆς ἐν Τιμαίῳ ψυχογονίας.*) If we admit the explanation by which Plutarch proposes to vindicate the consistency of Plato, the general position contained in Cudworth, and in the text to which this note refers, must be allowed to retain its validity.

^s So Warburton supposes. *Div. Leg.* iii. §. 4. vol. iii. p. 184, 185.

tained. The reasonings of Plato, who first reasoned upon the subject, were, as we have seen, framed upon principles purely metaphysical, to the almost total exclusion of those moral considerations which are necessary to fix the boundaries of their application. These reasonings, as we have also seen, were equally conclusive for the past and future eternity, the brutal and the human soul: and the metempsychosis was the form of doctrine they were meant to support.

It would be improper to proceed without a moment's pause to contemplate the mischief which must necessarily result from these principles. We cannot too strongly reprobate the conduct of those pretended advocates for the immortality of the soul, who ascribed to it a retrospective existence. This was imparting to the doctrine a vulnerable quality which does not justly belong to it, and putting a weapon of assault into the hands of the enemy: a weapon which might be wielded with the greater effect, because the common sense of mankind would be enlisted in the cause. Accordingly we find, that in the exposure and derision of this notion consists a great part of what is advanced by Lucretius for the purpose of disproving a future state: that notion being treated as an essential part of the doctrine, the confutation of which involved a confutation of the whole. We have to complain of a similar tendency in the mode of deducing immortality from a simple regard to the incorporeal principle of animal motion and volition. How, we may reasonably ask, can such deduction be restrained from extending itself from the human to the brutal soul? The difficulty of this limitation will be illustrated by the following

remark of Cudworth. "We shall endeavour," says that great writer, "to suggest something towards the
 "easing the minds of those, who are so much burdened with this difficulty; namely, That they may,
 "if they please, suppose the souls of brutes, being
 "but so many particular eradiations or effluxes from
 "that source of life above, whensoever and where-
 "soever there is any fitly prepared matter capable
 "to receive them, and to be actuated by them, to
 "have a sense and fruition of themselves in it, so
 "long as it continues such; but as soon as ever those
 "organized bodies of theirs, by reason of their indis-
 "position, become incapable of being further acted
 "upon by them, then to be resumed again and re-
 "tracted back to their original head and fountain.
 "Since it cannot be doubted, but what creates any
 "thing out of nothing, or sends it forth from itself,
 "by free and voluntary emanation, may be able ei-
 "ther to retract the same back again to its original
 "source, or else to annihilate it at pleasure^t." But
 now the question arises: Why should not the same
 power of retracting and annihilating be exercised
 upon man also? Such is the essential weakness of
 those reasonings respecting the future destiny of
 man which proceed upon principles purely metaphy-
 sical. It is true, this writer proceeds afterwards to
 state the real grounds of distinction belonging to
 the moral and rational constitution of man: but this
 is only to confirm our position, that such distinction
 cannot satisfactorily be maintained on any other
 principles.

The prospect of perpetuity in the human exist-

^t Intellectual System, c. i. §. 35.

ence has indeed been deduced in a pleasing and judicious, if not an irrefragable, manner, from an examination of its inherent qualities and powers : but in this instance, the force of the reasoning consists in coupling with that examination a regard to the purposes of nature and the wisdom of creation. The argument may be briefly stated thus : The seed of a forest-tree contains within it a latent principle of life, which was given with a view to its future magnitude, its towering height, its long continuance of growth, and the duration of centuries. Would the Author of nature have infused such a principle into the embryo of a fleeting production, which is destined to rise but little above the ground, to mature and wither away soon after its appearance ? And do we not find in the human soul a corresponding faculty, which indicates in its Creator the contemplation, not of centuries, but of eternity ? a faculty of enlarging its powers and extending its knowledge in infinite progression, and in the exercise of those functions which peculiarly belong to it ? If nature do nothing in vain ; if she delight not in counteracting her own tendencies ; shall we say that this capacity of endless improvement was given only with a view to a limited, and even a short, existence ? Let us pursue the argument in the beautiful language of the author who first suggested it. “ Would an infinitely wise Being “ make such glorious creatures for so mean a purpose ? Can he delight in the production of such “ abortive intelligences, such shortlived reasonable “ beings ? Would he give us talents that are not “ to be exerted ? capacities that are never to be

“ gratified? How can we find that wisdom which
“ shines through all his works, in the formation of
“ man, without looking on this world as only a nur-
“ sery for the next; and believing that the several
“ generations of rational creatures, which rise up
“ and disappear in such quick successions, are only to
“ receive their first rudiments of existence here, and
“ afterwards to be transplanted into a more friendly
“ climate, where they may spread and flourish to all
“ eternity?” The reasoning thus stated is more than
equal in value to every thing that ever was offered
by the ancient philosophers on the same subject. Our
attention is more especially due to it by reason of its
exemption from all the defects attached to their spec-
ulations. Here is no confusion of the human and
the brutal soul. For, to revert to the words of the
same incomparable writer ^u, “ a brute arrives at a
“ point of perfection that he can never pass: in a
“ few years he has all the endowments he is capable
“ of; and were he to live ten thousand more, would
“ be the same thing he is at present.” Nor is there
any thing here which implies the necessity of a pre-
vious existence, but rather a presumption of the
contrary: for the argument supposes a perpetual ad-
vancement towards perfection from a weak and slen-
der beginning, in the continual increase of strength
and enlargement of knowledge, without the possi-
bility of ever reaching the point which it always
approaches. But we must quit the refreshing pros-
pect unfolded to us in this sublime contemplation,
and resume our progress over those barren deserts
which we have undertaken to traverse.

^u Addison, Spectator, No. 111.

The metempsychosis of Egypt developed a prospect of immortality so degrading and loathsome, that, in the estimation of Cicero, a total extinction of life would be preferable to the kind of existence which it promises^x. According to this system, the human soul is supposed to pass, after its separation from the body, into other animal bodies, successively to all eternity, resuming the human character, after going through the whole round of the brute creation, once in every revolution of three thousand years. That this doctrine was the native growth of Egypt we learn from Herodotus^y. The passage which conveys this information has indeed been the subject of an unaccountable misconstruction, in which even the learned have been bewildered^z: for though the historian asserts, in language sufficiently perspicuous, that the Egyptians were the first who taught the transmigration, he has been almost universally understood to say, that they were the first who taught the immortality, of the soul. With some modifications, the doctrine thus described was transferred into the systems of Pythagoras and Plato, and thus supplanted those more simple notions of future retribution, which we have already noticed as belonging to the popular faith of the early Greeks.

The views of a future state which philosophy thus espoused are plainly encumbered with diffi-

^x “ Si nemo est quin emori malit, quam converti in aliquam figuram bestię, quamvis hominis mentem sit habiturus : ”—Cic. apud Lact. Div. Inst. v. 11.

^y Herodotus, ii. 123.

^z The names of Warburton, Brucker, sir John Marsham, Witsius, and, I believe, many others of great distinction, may be adduced in justification of this remark. See the Suppl. Rem.

culties, arising from the contradiction they present to the common sense of mankind. It is fit therefore, in order to a fair estimate of the merits and genius of ancient philosophy, that we should turn our attention to the methods which were employed for obviating them. In doing this, it will be right to consider, whether we discover a reliance on the unassisted powers of argumentation and resources of intellectual strength; or whether we do not rather recognise those indications of artifice and imposture which are at all times disgraceful, but most especially in those who profess the instruction of mankind in wisdom and virtue.

That the soul existed before the commencement of the present corporeal life, is a notion, which, in order to be credited, obviously requires the confirmation of memory and experience. Thus the poet very naturally inquires :

Si immortalis natura animæ
Constat, *et in corpus nascentibus insinuat* :
Cur super anteaetam ætatem meminisse nequimus?
Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?^a

As the want of such confirmation is generally felt, Pythagoras undertook to supply the deficiency. The means which he employed for that purpose are thus related.

He presented himself to the public assembly of the Crotonians in the character of a person who had suddenly returned from the other world. His pallid countenance and emaciated body displayed the form of a reanimated corpse. As to the reality of his death, that was regarded as a matter of undoubted notoriety. It had been generally reported seven

^a Lucretius, iii. 670.

years since, universally believed during the whole of the intermediate time, never contradicted, or even suspected. These circumstances sufficed, in the estimation of his hearers, to verify his pretensions. He also proved himself, in a public discourse, to possess the fullest knowledge of every remarkable incident, public and private, which had occurred among them during the abovenamed period. The inference which his hearers deduced from this evidence was that which he desired to establish; namely, that his information had been obtained by an intercourse with the spirits of those who had died in the interval between his own supposed death and his present re-appearance. This information we derive from several writers of antiquity^b: by whose testimony it further appears, that, during the said interval, he had, after first propagating a rumour of his death, abstracted himself from the light of day and the intercourse of mankind in a subterranean abode; holding communication with no human being except his mother, by whom he was carefully and minutely informed of every thing that passed; and, before he emerged from his dark recess, taking good care, by an abstemious and penitential diet, to make the ghastly aspect of his person correspond with his pretensions.

His credit was thus established as a competent authority for his doctrines; agreeably to the following lines of the poet, which are supposed to allude to this adventure:

^b Tertullian, *De Anima*, c. 28. Hermippus ap. Diog. Laert. viii. §. 41. Schol. in *Soph. El.* 62.

Ἡδὴ γὰρ εἶδον πολλακίς καὶ τοὺς σοφοὺς
 Λογῶ ματὴν θνησκοντας· εἰδ' ὅταν δομοὺς
 Ἐλθωσιν αὐθις, ἐκτετιμῆνται πλεον^d.

Relying on this authority, he attests the truth of his metempsychosis from his personal experience. He enumerates the names of four characters^e whose persons he sustained before he assumed that of Pythagoras. Among these was that of a warrior slain at the siege of Troy. With him he identifies himself by describing the marks on a shield, which he declared that he had himself worn in that memorable war, and which, corresponding with his description, was found in a temple where it had been dedicated by his conqueror^f. The story, as Tertullian intimates^g, bears upon it very strong characters of imposture: but these we dwell not upon, our present object being to expose, and not to confute, the folly of Grecian philosophy. Admitting however the evidence which is thus tendered, a difficulty presents itself in accounting for the want of consciousness, of which all men are sensible, with regard to the previous characters with whom they are thus identified. In order to the solution of this difficulty you are instructed, that before every readmission of the soul

^d Sophocles, *Electra*, 62.

^e Diog. Laert. viii. §. 4, 5. Porph. V. P. §. 45.

^f Diog. Laert. viii. 5. Ov. *Met.* xv. 160.

^g Referring to the story of his den, which we have above related, he says with regard to such a character, “*Quam non accesserit temeritatem, quam non tentaverit curiositatem, ut ad notam clypei illius perveniret? Quid autem si in historiis aliis quibus occultioribus reperit? Quid si defectæ jam traditionis superstites aliquas famæ aurulas hausit? Quid si ab ædituo re-dempta clam inspectione cognovit?*” *De Anima*, c. 28.

into a body, the shades of total darkness and oblivion are thrown over all the previous stores of experience and memory; all is forgotten, and, so far as consciousness is concerned, a new existence is begun. Still there remains one question: If such be the general law, how does it happen that Pythagoras himself is exempted from it^h? The point is thus cleared up. In one of the characters which he sustained, he was much beloved by Mercury, and esteemed his son. From that divinity he obtained an offer of any thing he chose to ask, short of immortality. The boon which he implored was the perpetual retention of his memory. This favour being granted, he was raised above the common lot of mortality, by preserving through the various changes of life he was destined to undergo, a consciousness of his identity: he thus became acquainted with the doctrine of the transmigration, and with the condition of departed soulsⁱ. Such were the tricks of this impostor, in order to establish the credibility of his doctrine: and in these proceedings we are especially to observe, that not any deductions of logic from the nature of the soul, the constitution of the world, or the attributes of the Deity, but his own alleged experience and his own transmigrations, were the medium of proof on which he chose to insist for the purpose of evincing the immortality of the soul^k.

^h “Cur solus Pythagoras alium atque alium se recognoscat, non et ego?” Tert. de An. 31.

ⁱ Diog. Laert. viii. §. 4, 5.

^k Ἀνεφερεν δ' αὐτον εις τους προτερον γεγονοντας· πρωτον μιν Ευφορβος λεγων γενεσθαι· δευτερον δ' Αιθαλιδης· τριτον Ερμοτιμος· τεταρτον δε Πυρ-

The methods resorted to by Plato for the same purpose will next deserve our attention. By him the metempsychosis of Pythagoras was adopted with slight variations from the system of his predecessor¹. In order to obviate the difficulty arising from the contradiction of sense and experience, he presents you with a pretty metaphysical conceit, by virtue of which you are taught to believe, that the knowledge acquired by the soul during the present life is only the recollection of notices which had been previously familiar to it, and which therefore evince the certainty of a previous existence^m.

With an apparent consciousness, however, of the slippery foundation on which his doctrine was thus placed, he also deems it necessary to supply you with the testimony of a person, who, returning to life after he had been dead twelve days, communicates the result of his own observation and inquiries

ρος· νυν δε Πυθαγορας· ΔΙ' ὧΝ ἐδείκνυν, ὡς-αθανατος ἡ ψυχη. Porph. de V. Pythag. §. 45. So also in Ovid, he declares the immortality of the soul, and deduces the proof of it thus :

“ Morte carent animæ : semperque, priore relictæ

“ Sede, novis domibus habitant vivuntque receptæ.

“ *Ipse ego (nam meminì) Trojani tempore belli*

“ *Panthoides Euphorbus eram.*

Met. xv.

¹ Thus, for instance, Pythagoras declared himself to have migrated three times into different bodies since the Trojan war (a period of about 700 years), and that 207 years had elapsed since he last appeared upon earth (Diog. Laert. viii. §. 14) : whereas Plato makes an interval of 1000 years to pass between every renewal of corporeal life.

^m Phædon, ii. 18—22. ; Menon, Opp. vol. iv. pp. 351 et seqq. Arnobius has wasted his talents and eloquence in the confutation of this impertinence. Adv. Gen. ii. 19. et seqq.

during his short excursion to the shades. On the credit of this respectable traveller (who professes to be specially sent and peculiarly qualified for the instruction of mankind on this important subject) you are assured of both the rewards of virtue and the penalties of guilt. These are, with few exceptions, limited in duration to a thousand years, and are not in any case distinctly stated to be eternal. At the expiration of this term, the separated soul receives a new lot, which determines its condition and fortunes on its ensuing return to the embodied life. This done, the waters of forgetfulness are drunk; all recollection and consciousness of a former existence are immediately effaced in a Lethean slumber: from which the soul is suddenly awaked, when it reenters the body of some terrestrial animal, whether man or brute, with all the feelings belonging to a new existenceⁿ. This notion is poetically conveyed by Virgil in the following lines:

Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos
Lethæum ad flumen Deus evocat agmine magno:
Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,
Rursus et incipiant in corpora velle reverti^o.

Here the oblivious cup is supposed to efface the memory both of the troubles of the former life, and of the Elysian pleasures which succeeded them after death, and thus to create in the disembodied spirit a willingness to reenter on a corporeal mansion.

ⁿ De Rep. x. vol. vii. p. 322. et seqq. See also the Phædrus, vol. x. p. 326.; and the Timæus, pp. 327, 432, et seqq. The various accounts contained in these dialogues and the Phædon are full of inconsistencies, the detail of which is not necessary to our present purpose.

^o Æn. vi.

Such were the views maintained and taught by Plato and Pythagoras. But what shall we think of the glory of these illustrious names, if it shall appear, that the doctrine of a future retribution, as it formed a part of their philosophy, was nothing more than a professed and public tenet, wholly at variance with their real opinions? Yet this, after due inquiry, will appear the probable conclusion^p. We are to observe in the characters of both these men a remarkable desire of signalizing their talents for legislation, combined in no small degree with that common vanity of political innovators, so fatal (as experience has often proved) to the peace of mankind, by which the theorist of government is led to imagine, that the interests of a nation can enjoy a safe and beneficial provision only in adopting and acting upon the speculations which himself approves. For the indulgence of this sentiment, Pythagoras obtained by his own ingenuity and the concurrence of circumstances an ample field^q. That Plato was

^p For the general evidence in support of this position, see the third book of Warburton's *Divine Legation*.

^q Porphyry (§. 21.) and Jamblichus (§. 33.) in their lives of this philosopher, enumerate a long list of the cities in Italy and Sicily whose political constitutions he framed. His very pragmatical disposition, and the just apprehensions to which it gave rise among those who preferred peace to innovation, are strikingly illustrated in one of the accounts which are handed down to us of the circumstances connected with his death. Being reduced to the necessity of flying for his life from the conspiracy of Cylon, and the general burst of popular hatred, which in various neighbouring states had manifested itself against both him and his sect, he betook himself for refuge to the Locrians; when he was thus addressed by a deputation of their citizens: "We have heard, Pythagoras, the fame of your wisdom and talents, but we are perfectly contented with the laws of our country, and shall en-

less successful is matter of just congratulation to the interests of humanity. This latter philosopher imagined that he had discovered in his own sagacity the only available resource for redressing the grievances and sufferings of his fellow-creatures. For less than this cannot be understood, when he tells us, that of all the civil communities existing in his time, there was none worthy of the philosophical character, and that the prospect of happiness to the human race was desperate, till the time should come, when that character and supreme power were found united in the same persons : then only could his own ideal schemes of excellence be practically displayed in all their benign influence and heavenly lustre^r. Actuated, as we may suppose, by these sentiments, (for we have described them after his own expressions,) his efforts were not wanting to obtain an opportunity of realizing his fanatical and detestable

“ deavour to maintain them. Take therefore what may be need-
ful for the supply of your necessities, and depart elsewhere.”
Porph. de Vita Pythag. §. 56. -

^r Τούτῳ ἐπαιτιῶμαι, μηδεμίαν ἀξίαν εἶναι τῶν νῦν καταστάσιν πόλεως, φιλοσοφοῦ φύσεως. De Rep. vi. Opp. vol. vii. p. 96. Ἐάν μῃ, ἣν δ' ἐγώ, ἣ οἱ φιλόσοφοι βασιλευσῶσιν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, ἣ οἱ βασιλεῖς τε νῦν λεγόμενοι καὶ δυνασταὶ φιλοσοφῶσι γνησίως τε καὶ ἱκανῶς, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς ταύτην ξυμπέσῃ δύναμις τε πολιτικὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία, τῶν δὲ νῦν πορευομένων χωρὶς ἐφ' ἑκάτερον αἱ πολλαὶ φύσεις ἐξ ἀναγκῆς αποκλεισθῶσιν, ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙ ΚΑΚΩΝ ΠΑΤΕΑ, ὡ φίλε Γλαυκῶν, ΤΑΙΣ ΠΟΛΕΣΙΝ· ΔΟΚΩ ΔΕ, ΟΥΔΕ ΤΩ· ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΩ· ΓΕΝΕΙ. ΟΥΔΕ Α΄ΤΤΗ Ἡ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ ΜΗΠΟΤΕ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΦΥΤῃ· ΤΕ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΑΥΤΝΑΤΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΦΩΣ ἩΛΙΟΥ ΙΔΗ, ἥΝ ΝΥΝ ΛΟΓΩ· ΔΙΕΛΗΛΥΘΑΜΕΝ. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὅμοιοι παλαιὰ ὁκνον ἐντιθῆσι λεγείν, ὅρωντι ὥς πολὺ παραδοξάν ῥηθήσεται. χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὅτι ΟΥΚ ἈΝ ἈΛΛΗ ΤΙΣ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΟΝΗΣΕΙΕΝ, ΟΥΤΕ ΙΔΙΑ· ΟΥΤΕ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ. Ibid. v. p. 52.

commonwealth : and they were so far effectual, as to obtain from Dionysius the younger a promise of a tract of land and a number of colonists for that purpose ^s. This promise, however, the cautious tyrant was prudent enough to retract : and thus the world have been prevented from learning by experiment the value of a political system, which embraced, among other monstrous peculiarities, an intercommunity of wives and property, the murder of weak and deformed infants, and the admission of women in common with men to civil and military offices. But both these great lights of paganism, though themselves justly suspected of infidelity with regard to a future retribution, could discover, when they undertook the work of legislation, that mankind could not be governed without the influence of that doctrine : and we have the most probable grounds for supposing, that their profession of this tenet may have been dictated by a sense of political expediency, but that their initiated followers were taught after the example of themselves to believe the total falsehood of it ^t.

^s Diog. Laert. iii. 21.

^t Such, in regard to Pythagoras, is the almost necessary inference from the following passage of Timæus the Locrian, whose short treatise is supposed to contain an authentic exposition of the real Pythagorean doctrines. It will here be observed, that a future retribution is spoken of as a doctrine of indispensable utility, but of acknowledged falsehood. 'Ὅτῳ μὲν ὁ δαίμων μοίρας τασθ' ἐλαχε, δι' ἀλαθεστάταιν δοξᾶν ἀγεται ἐπὶ τὸν εὐδαιμονεστάτον βίον· εἰ δὲ καὶ τις σκληρὸς καὶ ἀπειθής, τοῦτ' ἂν ἐπέσθῃ κόλασις ἅ τ' ἐκ τῶν νόμων καὶ ἅ ἐκ τῶν λόγων συντόνα ἐπαγοῖσα δειμᾶτα τε ἐπουρανία καὶ τὰ καθ' ἄδew, ὅτι κόλασιες ἀπαραίτητοι ἀποκείνται δυσδαιμοσὶ νεώτεροις· καὶ τὰλλα ὅσα ἐπαινῶ τὸν Ἰωνικὸν ποιητὰν ἐκ παλαιᾶς ποιεῖντα τῶς ἐναγωγῆς. ὥς γὰρ τὰ σῶματα νοσῶδεσι ποκα ὑγιαζόμες, εἰ καὶ μὴ εἰκὴ τοῖς ὑγιεινοτάτοις, οὕτω ΤΑΣ ΨΥΧΑΣ

The course of our present observations suggests a remark, which, if it be not called for by our immediate subject, may be pardoned as not wholly irrelevant to the cause of revealed truth. The distinction of a public and a secret doctrine will be found to characterize almost every system of imposture which was ever practised for the delusion of mankind. We find it in the priesthood of Egypt, the philosophers of Greece, the lawgivers and magistrates of Rome^s: in almost every hea-

ΑΠΕΙΡΓΟΜΕΣ ΨΕΤΔΕΣΙ ΛΟΓΟΙΣ, ΕΙ ΚΑ ΜΗ ΑΓΗΤΑΙ ΑΛΛΘΕΣΙ. λεγοιντο δ' αναγκαιως και τιμωριαι ξεναι, ως μετενδυμεναν ταν ψυχαν, των μεν δειλων, εις γυναικεα σκανεα, ποθ' ὕβριν εκδιδομενα· των δε μισαιφονων, εις θηριων σωματα, ποτι κολασιν· λαγων δ' εις συων η κατρων μορφας· κουφων δε και μετεωρων, εις πτηνων αεροπορων· αργων δε και απρακτων, αμαθων τε και ανοητων, εις ταν των ενυδρων ιδεαν. De Anima Mundi, in Platonis Opp. vol. x. p. 28. With regard to Plato, the principle by which he was actuated as a teacher of a future state is plainly declared, in the following words of Diogenes Laertius, to have been purely political: Εν δε τοις διαλογοις και την δικαιοσυνην θεου νομον ὑπελαμβανεν, 'ΩΣ ΙΣΧΥΡΟΤΕΡΑΝ ΠΡΟΤΡΕΨΑΙ ΤΑ ΔΙΚΑΙΑ ΠΡΑΤΤΕΙΝ, 'ΙΝΑ ΜΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ΔΙΚΑΣ 'ΥΠΟΧΘΙΟΙΝ ΟΙ ΚΑΚΟΤΥΓΟΙ. 'Οθεν και μυθικωτερος ενιοις ὑπεληφθη, τοις συγγραμμασιν εγκαταμιξας τας τοιαντας διηγησεις, 'ΟΠΩΣ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΤ ΑΔΗΛΟΤ ΤΡΟΠΟΤ ΤΟΤ ΕΧΕΙΝ ΤΑ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ, 'ΟΤΤΩΣ ΑΠΕΧΟΝΤΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΔΙΚΗΜΑΤΩΝ. και ταυτα μεν ην αυτω τα αρεσκοντα. Diog. Laert. iii. §. 79, 80. We shall take occasion to inquire further into the real sentiments of both these philosophers in the Supplementary Remarks.

^s The genius of Roman legislation in regard to the national religion is well illustrated in the following remarkable narrative of Lactantius: "Harum vanitatum apud Romanos autor et constitutor Sabinus ille rex fuit, qui maxime animos hominum rudes "atque imperitos novis superstitionibus implicavit: quod ut faceret aliqua cum autoritate, simulavit cum Dea Egeria nocturnos

then country of which the governors were more enlightened than the governed. Thus, philosophy employed the doctrine of future rewards and punishments as a tool of government and a curb on the passions of the multitude: while, by those who most sedulously encouraged that belief, it was inwardly regarded as void of truth, and valuable only

“ se habere congressus. Erat quædam spelunca peropaca in
 “ nemore Aricino, unde rivus perenni fonte manabat; huc remo-
 “ tis arbitris se inferre consueverat, ut mentiri possit, monitu Deæ
 “ conjugis ea sacra populo se tradere, quæ acceptissima Diis
 “ essent: videlicet astutiam Minois voluit imitari, qui se in an-
 “ trum Jovis recondebat, et ibi diu moratus, leges tanquam sibi a
 “ Jove traditas afferebat, ut homines ad parendum non modo im-
 “ perio, sed etiam religione constringeret. Nec difficile sane fuit
 “ persuadere pastoribus. Itaque pontifices, flamines, salios, au-
 “ gures creavit, Deos per familias descripsit. Sic novi populi fe-
 “ roces animos mitigavit, et ad studia pacis a rebus bellicis avoca-
 “ vit. *Sed cum alios falleret, seipsum tamen non fefellit.* Nam
 “ post annos plurimos, Cornelio et Bebio Coss. in agro scribæ
 “ Petilii sub Janiculo arcæ duæ lapideæ sunt repertæ a fossoribus,
 “ quarum in altera corpus Numæ fuit, in altera septem Latini
 “ libri de jure pontificio, item Græci totidem de disciplina sapien-
 “ tiæ scripti, quibus religiones, non eas modo, quas ipse instituerat,
 “ sed omnes præterea dissolvit. *Qua re ad Senatum delata, decre-*
 “ *tum est, ut hi libri abolerentur: ita eos Q. Petilius prætor urba-*
 “ *nus in concione populi concremavit.*” Div. Inst. i. 22. Similar
 to this is an equally striking passage in Cicero, de Div. ii. 33. He
 is here, though himself an augur, reasoning against the truth of
 divination by augury; and yet, after declaring the falsehood of
 its pretensions in the strongest terms, he lays down, in a man-
 ner equally strong, the duty of political imposture in regard to
 its observance. The reason assigned is, “ retinetur et ad opinio-
 “ nem vulgi, et ad magnas utilitates.” On the strength of this
 principle he says, that a Roman commander was justly punished
 with death for the neglect of it.

as a part of the necessary machinery of the state. In like manner, the mythology of paganism was embraced with unhesitating credulity by the vulgar, and enjoyed, by reason of its supposed political utility, the utmost sanction of exterior respect and decent observance from the enlightened and great: but the latter, though adorned in many cases with the most exalted offices of the national religion, contemplated its gross absurdity with secret derision and contempt. It is peculiar to the religion of the holy Scriptures, that it has in all ages impressed an equal veneration on the learned and the ignorant. We have no double doctrine here. The Gospel, in the fullest extent of its discoveries, is preached to the poor. The great mystery of godliness which it reveals is impartially communicated. It disclaims cunningly devised fables^u, and denounces the severest punishment on every one that maketh a lie^x. It has no doctrines but such as are worthy of all men to be received: no concealed tenets for the few, in contradiction of the principles avowed to the many. Here the statesman and the mechanic, the philosopher and the peasant, are upon a common footing: by both the way of life is embraced with equal faith, humility, and reverence: both are contented to draw their supplies of spiritual knowledge and refreshment from the same well of salvation. The religion which the Bible teaches is the only religion which was ever sincerely and extensively professed by those

^u 2 Pet. i. 16.^x Rev. xxi. 8, 27.

who enjoyed the aid of mental improvement towards the discrimination of truth and error. That the Gospel has, indeed, sometimes encountered the scorn of infidelity in a cultivated and accomplished mind, we do not here deny : nor does the admission of the fact call for any laboured or difficult explanation, since the faith which it prescribes is very different from the fruit, or the privilege, of scientific and literary eminence. But this we assert: It numbers among its adherents multitudes of persons distinguished by the largest capacity of genius together with the greatest intellectual strength, and enriched, beyond the opportunities which ancient philosophy could boast, with the collective wisdom afforded by many succeeding ages of experience and inquiry. Of these it may be truly said, that the principles of faith which they professed they have conscientiously entertained : they have carried them from the public view of the world into the devotion of the closet, and have inwardly applied them for the direction of life and the consolation of grief. This is a striking distinction of the faith which we profess, and deserves to be noticed as, at least, a characteristic symptom of truth. It particularly claims the attention of those, who comprehend in one general charge of imposture all the religions prevailing in the world. They will find, that the same cannot be alleged in favour of any other religious system. They will find, that they cannot, among the pontiffs, the statesmen, and the philosophers of paganism, adduce instances, in which the religion of the state was professed with the same

sincerity, and with minds as much enlarged and enlightened, as it was in the cases of Butler and Cudworth; of Clarendon and Hale; of Newton, Boyle, and Locke.

But to return from this digression. It is now time that we should inquire, in what manner the subject of a future state was treated by those other philosophical sects which have been hitherto unnoticed.

Of these, the school of Zeno may justly command our interest, by reason of that imposing dignity which it assumes in some of the most opposite conditions of human life: for it reckons among its adherents both the philosophic courtier and the stern republican; and the lustre of its doctrines was equally sustained in the purple of an emperor and the sordid garments of a slave. The philosophy of the Stoics was chiefly remarkable for the contradiction of nature, accompanied by the strongest professions of a close adherence to it: in this characteristic vanity they will be found to agree, though the opinions they held^y, and more especially those relating to the soul, were remarkably various and contradictory. In general, they maintained that its substance was corporeal^z: nevertheless, it was destined to continue after death. Such however was the whimsical singularity of their doctrine in regard to this survival, that we can only illustrate it by the similitude of a physician, who, after seeing his pa-

^y Cic. Acad. Quæst. iv. 41.

^z Diog. Laert. vii. §. 156. Cic. Acad. Quæst. i. 11.

tient past the critical and anxious hour, pronounces his case to be desperate when the malady has wholly disappeared. For though, according to their scheme, the soul was to remain after the dissolution of the grosser body, still, its separate duration was to be only limited^a: at the conflagration of the world, all remaining souls were to be annihilated, and many, according to some opinions, were doomed to extinction at an earlier period^b. After this conflagration, the frame of nature was to revive; the order of things and the course of events, which had prevailed in the former world, were to be exactly renewed; virtue and vice were to experience the same fortunes, the former to be harassed with the same persecutions, and the latter to be crowned with the same unmerited prosperity^c. Here was a future existence without a future retribution. Such was the Stoical regeneration^d: which, according to the principles of that school, was to recur after equal periods of time to all eternity. But there was one form in which this doctrine was entertained, without making any provision for the revival of the soul: the actors on the new theatre, as well as the scenes belonging to it, being, on this view, not the same with those of the former, but perfectly similar to them. Thus, Socrates was again to teach philo-

^a Diog. Laert. vii. §. 156. Cic. Tusc. Disp. i. 32. M. Antonin. iv. 21.

^b Diog. Laert. vii. §. 157.

^c Orig. cont. Cels. iv. 68. Seneca, Ep. 36. Chrysippus apud Lactantium, Div. Inst. vii. 23. Diog. Laert. in Zenone.

^d Περιοδική παλιγγενεσία. M. Antoninus, xi. 1.

sophy at Athens, again to be accused by Anytus and Melitus, again vexed by a quarrelsome wife: but these were not the same Socrates, the same Athens, the same accusers, and the same wife, but others exactly resembling them in the most minute incidents and qualities^e. Future retribution was indeed inadmissible on the principles of Stoicism: it was contradictory to its other doctrines, and would have been an incongruous and unnecessary appendage to such a system. How could virtue cherish the hope of a future reward? since, even in the present life, it was all-sufficient in its own resources to the purposes of happiness^f; the hardships it was called upon to endure were only imaginary^g; and nothing was really an evil but that which induced a moral depravation of the soul^h. On the other hand, where could the fear of future punishment find room to operate? since vice, even in its present state, was declared to carry its own punishment along with itⁱ; and as to pain and suffering, they were evils only in the vulgar and wrong estimation of mankind.

The later Academics, as distinguished from the earlier followers of Plato, ought not to be passed over in this survey, since they did not deny a future state. But as they neither affirmed nor denied any

^e Orig. cont. Cels. iv. 68.

^f *Ανταρκής ἡ ἀρετὴ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν.* Stoic. Paradoxa.

^g M. Antonin. ii. 11.

^h *Ὁ δὲ χεῖρῳ μὴ ποιεῖ ἀνθρώπον, πῶς αὖ τούτῳ βίον ἀνθρώπου χεῖρῳ ποήσειεν;* M. Antonin. ii. 11.

ⁱ M. Antonin. ix. 4.

thing, their professed principle embracing a discussion of all questions and a decision of none^k, we may content ourselves with compendiously stating their character as to this and all other points of philosophical inquiry, in the words of St. Paul: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth^l." The same character will apply to another sect, whose sceptical principles were carried to a still greater extent.

Our present review might be thought defective, if it did not embrace a few words of separate regard to an individual character, who is justly esteemed the most conspicuous ornament of ancient philosophy. The case of Socrates has been alleged by Warburton, as a solitary instance among the ancient philosophers, in which the belief of future rewards and punishments was sincerely entertained^m: and another learned writer seems to intimate, that such belief may, in this instance, have been unassociated with those wild and mischievous principles, which, in the earlier part of this survey, we stated to be always implied in the philosophical doctrine respecting the immortality of the soulⁿ. The truth or

^k "Academiæ disciplina, in qua ignoratio et discitur et docetur." Lact. Div. Inst. "Quorum oratio nihil ipsa judicat, sed habetur in omnes partes." Cic. Tusc. Quæst. v. 29. et 11. "Dicendum est ita, nihil ut affirmem, quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et mihi ipse diffidens." De Div. ii. 3. See also Acad. Quæst. i. 12.

^l 2 Tim. iii. 7.

^m Div. Leg. iii. §. 3. p. 47. and §. 4. p. 195.

ⁿ Brucker. See the quotation in note ^x, p. 88. of this work.

falsehood of these opinions cannot, however, be decided by any admissible evidence which separately and distinctly applies to the individual. Of his two disciples, from whom we derive our knowledge of his character, Xenophon has not been very copious or explicit in detailing his precise sentiments on this subject: and Plato has given us so much of his own fanaticism in the form of his master's discourses, as renders it impossible by such a guide to ascertain his real opinions. If indeed the latter authority were admitted, the question must at once be decided; and Socrates must be included in the general censure of ancient philosophy. It may be proper, however, to state the reasons which occur in favour of his exemption from it. We are to observe then, that both the substance and the method of his instructions were in general marked by a striking opposition to those of preceding teachers^o: it may therefore be thought reasonable to suppose, that he did not, like Plato, philosophize respecting the soul on the principles of Thales and Pythagoras. The errors of Plato, in regard to this subject, were generated by his partiality to metaphysical speculations: whereas,

^o “Socrates mihi videtur, id quod constat inter omnes, *primus*
 “*a rebus occultis et ab ipsa natura involutis, in quibus omnes ante*
 “*eum philosophi occupati fuerunt, avocavisse philosophiam, et ad*
 “*vitam communem adduxisse: ut de virtutibus et vitiis, omni-*
 “*noque de bonis rebus et malis quæreret: cælestia autem vel*
 “*procul esse a nostra cognitione censeret, vel, si maxime cognita*
 “*essent, nihil tamen ad bene vivendum.”* Cic. Acad. Quæst.
 i. 4. Φησι δ' αὐτον Αριστοξενος——γνοντα την φυσικην θεωριαν μηδεν
 ειναι προς ημας, τα ηθικα φιλοσοφειν ΑΡΞΑΙ. Diog. Laert. in Socr.

the reasonings and the studies of Socrates were, in the latter part of his life at least, purely moral^p. It may therefore be thought, that the doctrine of a future state would be most approved by him in that form, which was best adapted to strengthen the cause of virtue, the professed aim of his instructions; rather than in that of other philosophers, in whose systems its moral efficacy was much weakened. On these grounds, it may appear probable, that his views of a future life would discover a simple acquiescence in the common hopes and feelings of mankind; accompanied however with that improvement, which might be expected to result from a more refined morality. Having stated these probabilities on one side of the question, we must now add, that any conclusion we might draw from them in support of the opinions to which we refer, are plainly contradicted by the most decided testimonies of antiquity respecting the doctrine of the soul, as it was entertained by the philosophers in general^q. If Socrates did not

^p See the foregoing note.

^q The general voice of antiquity declares, that all the philosophers who maintained the immortality, maintained also the pre-existence of the soul. Lactantius may supply an example: "There was *none of the philosophers*," says he, "who understood, that the soul both had a beginning of existence, and would not have an end." "Nemo [philosophorum] vidit, et nasci animas et non occidere." Div. Inst. iii. 18. "They thought the survival impossible, unless the previous existence was granted." "Non putaverunt aliter fieri posse, ut supersint animæ post corpora, nisi videantur fuisse ante corpora." Id. Ibid. With regard to the two other principles which declare the immortality of brutes, and the unchangeable number of souls, they are necessarily

avowedly concur in these principles, we have the fullest reason to believe, that he never attempted to disprove, nor even disowned them. After the fullest examination, our most probable conclusion will be, that his real feelings in regard to this doctrine are comprehended and expressed in his general profession of universal ignorance and uncertainty: "that he knew but one thing, which was, that he knew nothing." There is a story related of him, which favours this conclusion, and indicates that the sceptical turn of his mind discovered itself on this subject as well as on others. Being asked, "What is the nature of the place appointed for departed souls?" he is said to have replied, "I have neither visited it myself, nor met with any of its inhabitants." It is however right, in justice to his

comprised in the doctrine of the preexistence, and corollaries from the reasoning by which the latter is deduced. Such being the universal character of the philosophical doctrine of the soul, it is almost impossible, that, if Socrates had formed an exception to it, that exception should have passed unnoticed. On the contrary, the great celebrity of his character must have led to the mention of so striking a particular in relation both to the person and the doctrine. So far then as he philosophically maintained the immortality of the soul, he must have held it together with all its philosophical encumbrances. But, as we have stated, the more probable supposition is, that he did not dogmatize at all on the subject, but viewed it under the influence of that sceptical suspense of judgment which he uniformly professed: "quod dicebat constanter, et in qua sententia permanebat." Cic. Acad. Quæst. i. 4.

Ἐρωτηθεὶς, τίνα ἐστὶν ἐν ᾧ, εἶπε· Οὐτε ἐγὼ πεπορευμαι, οὐτε τῶν ἐκείσε τινὶ συντετυχῆκα. Stobæi Anthol. Sermon. cclxxi. p. 878. Ed.

character to observe, that he does not appear to have sanctioned the double doctrine : and therefore, whatever countenance he might give to the prospect of a future retribution was probably sincere.

Here we may close the detail of opinions maintained respectively by the ancient schools and teachers : for though many of them have not yet been specified, the remainder may be dismissed with one general remark ; they both held and taught, that death is the total and final annihilation of human existence^s. There are however some general features of absurdity and impiety connected with the philosophical views of the soul, to omit the mention

Wecheli. How little he was disposed to assert any thing positive on the subject, may appear from his conversation with Hippias the Elean, related by Xenophon. (Mem. iv.) In this dialogue, Socrates asserts an eternal and unwritten law prescribed by Divine authority, in contradistinction from the laws of man. Of the former he says, that those who violate its injunctions must inevitably suffer the punishment of their crime : whereas the transgressors of human laws may possibly escape. One would think, that the proof of this proposition could not be made out without a future state. Of this however Socrates says not a word, but merely contents himself with a lame argument, to shew that the punishment of each transgression of the Divine law was an effect, naturally resulting, *in the present life*, from the act of transgression itself ; as for example, that ingratitude is punished by the desertion of friends. A style of reasoning, which not only dispenses with the necessity of a future state, but even subverts one of the most popular grounds of argument in support of it.

^s The case of Aristotle and his followers is regarded by Cudworth as rather dubious : but the writings of that philosopher render it sufficiently evident, that he did not maintain the immortality of the soul in a state of *separate* existence.

of which would be inconsistent with our present design, though it be not necessary to particularize the sects in which we discover them.

A very prevailing view of this doctrine in the philosophy of the ancients was that, in which, to employ the language of a late eloquent writer, the immortality of the soul was admitted, “ only under
“ the idea of a reunion with the nature of the Deity;
“ the great eternal ONE, from whom all souls proceed, and into whose all-comprehending essence
“ they are at death resolved again; and, like a
“ bubble burst and lost in the parent ocean, are
“ swallowed up in the immensity of God; and thus
“ all personal identity and separate consciousness
“ are for ever extinguished^t.” Here the doctrine of a future state, as to all the purposes of hope and fear, of consolation and virtue, is plainly extinct. This, surely, is bad enough: but yet the full magnitude of the impiety and folly involved in this opinion will not be disclosed, till we understand that particular notion of the Divine nature which frequently formed a part of it; for it supposes the soul, as to both its origin and future destiny, to maintain an intimate relation with God. This notion was as follows. The Deity was regarded as nothing else than that principle of vitality and motion which pervades the universe; in which the movement of the spheres, the powers and functions of animate and inanimate creatures, are supposed to originate; and which, according to this system, is itself devoid

^t White's Bampton Lectures, Sermon. iii.

of all the attributes of personality. From the Divine essence, thus contemplated, the soul was supposed to emanate at the commencement of the animal life, and to be again absorbed into it at death. This doctrine is commonly illustrated by comparing the soul to a bottle, filled with sea-water and placed in the sea : of which the contents, immediately on the fracture of the vessel, mingle in the indiscriminate mass of the surrounding element ^u.

As some of the philosophers erred in denying the personality of God, the whole of them discovered a similar obliquity of judgment in the contemplation of his attributes. On this subject, there was a remarkable opinion sanctioned by the unanimous voice

^u With regard to the notions of both the Deity and the human soul which are here described, the reader is referred for further authorities and illustration to Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, c. 3.; Warburton's *Div. Leg.* iii. §. 4.; the observations of Brucker respecting the atheism of the Stoics, *Hist. Phil.* vol. i. p. 936.; and Bayle's *Dictionary*, Art. Spinoza, Rem. A. The two notions appear to be combined together in the following passage :

“ Quidquid est hoc, omnia animat, format, alit, auget, creat,

“ Sepelit, recipitque in sese omnia : omniumque idem est pater :

“ Indidemque eadem, quæ oriuntur de integro, atque eodem
“ occidunt.”

Pacuvius apud Cic. de Div. i. 57.

The following is of the same class, but not quite so bad ; since the personality of the Deity seems to be acknowledged, and the vital principle of nature (*σπερματικός λογος*) to be distinguished from the Divine essence : *Εννεστης ως μερος' εναφανισθηση τῷ γεννηταντι' μαλλον δε αναληφθηση εις τον λογον αυτου τον σπερματικον κατα μεταβολην.* M. Antoninus, iv. 14.

of pagan philosophy ; which it is incumbent on us to notice, by reason of the colouring that it must and did impart to those views of a future state which were entertained in conjunction with it. They reasoned thus : The Deity is void of anger and hatred : as such, he cannot be disposed to inflict pain or suffering on any who are subject to his power : if, therefore, the soul survive the body, it cannot be the subject of punishment^x. Such was philosophy. It abounded in vain distinctions and subtle refinements : but it could not discriminate between the vindictive passions of man and the righteous judgment of God, nor entertain the possibility of punishment without malevolence and cruelty in the punisher. This, if we regard its intellectual value, can be considered little better than the weakest dotage of the mind. If we calculate its moral influence, it is plain that it must have operated, like those indulgences which conveyed the absolution of future as well as past

^x “ Aiunt quidam, nec gratificari Deum cuiquam, nec irasci ;
 “ sed securum et quietum immortalitatis suæ bonis perfrui. Alii
 “ vero iram tollunt, gratiam relinquunt Deo ; naturam enim sum-
 “ ma virtute præstantem, ut non maleficam, sic beneficam esse
 “ debere. Ita omnes philosophi de ira consentiunt, de gratia dis-
 “ crepant.” Lact. de Ira Dei, c. ii. “ Hoc quidem commune est om-
 “ nium philosophorum, non eorum modo, qui Deum nihil habere
 “ ipsum negotii dicunt, et nihil exhibere alteri : sed eorum etiam,
 “ qui Deum semper agere aliquid et moliri volunt, nunquam nec
 “ irasci Deum, nec nocere.” Cic. de Off. iii. 28. The general
 principle thus laid down is applied to the subject of a future state
 by Marcus Antoninus, in the following words : Το ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπελ-
 θεῖν, εἰ μὲν θεοὶ εἰσιν, οὐδὲν δεινόν· ΚΑΚΩ, ΓΑΡ ΣΕ ΟΥΚ ἈΝ ΠΕΡΙΒΑ-
 ΛΟΙΕΝ. ii. 11.

sins, as a charter of impunity to all the evil actions and inclinations of men^y.

Before we quit our present subject, we should not omit to remark among the striking features in the ancient doctrine of the soul, that hesitation and scepticism by which it is generally characterized. The nature and the justice of this charge will be exemplified by a passage from Seneca, who thus endeavours to magnify the honours of philosophy by the employment of a topic, which, justly considered, proclaims only its disgrace. "Respecting the soul," he observes, "there are questions without number
"to be discussed. What is its origin? What is
"its quality? When did it begin to exist? How
"long will it endure? Does it migrate from one
"place to another, and change its abode by successive admissions into the forms of various animals?
"Or, does it undergo the corporeal servitude only
"once, and wander at large in the universe as soon
"as it is released? Is it corporeal, or not? What
"will be its employments when it shall cease to act
"through the instrumentality of our bodies? How will

^y "Sapientis enim est malefacere, si et utile sit, et tutum :
"quoniam si quis in cœlo Deus est, non irascitur cuquam."
Lact. Div. Inst. iii. 17. The passage quoted from Cicero in the last note was designed to shew, that perjury might be committed, so far as the Deity is concerned, with perfect impunity. Cicero, after admitting this doctrine, states the obligation of an oath to consist, not in the prospect of Divine retribution, but in the principle of good faith and probity. "Quod affirmate, quasi
"Deo teste, promiseris, id tenendum est. Jam enim non ad
"iram deorum, quæ nulla est, sed ad justitiam et ad fidem pertinet." De Off. iii. 29.

“ it employ its freedom when released from the pre-
 “ sent captivity? Will it forget its former know-
 “ ledge, and begin for the first time to know itself,
 “ when it is abstracted from the body, and with-
 “ drawn to the etherial mansions?” Thus did the
 collected treasures of philosophy, after many ages of
 diligent research, consist only in a rich accumula-
 tion of doubts. Her talent was displayed in proposing
 questions which she could not decide, and in start-
 ing difficulties which she could not obviate. While
 her followers are amused with promises of assistance
 in the pursuit of truth, they are conducted into laby-
 rinths of intricacy and danger, and left in a state of
 painful uncertainty, which had seldom been expe-
 rienced by any but those who had submitted to her
 direction. For, with regard to those who laboured
 most to establish a future state by rational proof, it may
 be truly said, that neither in themselves nor others
 were their efforts productive of any satisfactory con-

7 “ Innumerabiles quæstiones sunt de animo tantum : unde sit,
 “ qualis sit, quando esse incipiat, quamdiu sit : an aliunde alio
 “ transeat, et domicilium mutet, ad alias animalium formas, alias-
 “ que conjectus : an non amplius quam semel serviat, et emissus
 “ vagetur in toto : utrum corpus sit, an non sit : quid sit factu-
 “ rus, cum per nos aliquid facere desierit : quomodo libertate sua
 “ usus, cum ex hac effugerit cavea : an obliviscatur priorum, et
 “ illic nosse se incipiat, postquam de corpore abductus in sublime
 “ recessit.” Ep. 88. To the same effect Cicero : “ Tenemusne
 “ quid animus sit ? ubi sit ? denique, sitne, aut ut Dicæarcho
 “ visum est, ne sit quidem ullus ? si est : tresne partes habeat, ut
 “ Platoni placuit, rationis, iræ, cupiditatis ; an simplex, unusque
 “ sit ? si unus et simplex, utrum sit ignis, an anima, an sanguis ?
 “ an, ut Xenocrates, mens nullo corpore ? quod intelligi, quale
 “ sit, vix potest. Et, quicquid est, mortale sit an æternum ?
 “ nam utramque in partem multa dicuntur.” Acad. Quæst. iv. 39.

viction, and scarcely of any practical effect in the regulation of life^a. If you would, any where among mankind, discover the evidence of this conviction and of this influence, you will find it chiefly among those uncultivated savages by whom the traditional doctrine was implicitly embraced without inquiry; but you will search for it in vain among the great masters of reason and learning. As an example of this, we may refer to the concluding words in Plato's defence of Socrates before his judges: "We now depart each to his respective destination, you to live, and I to die: but which of these is the better, no mortal can declare^b." Another philosophical inquirer is presented to us by Cicero, as expressing himself thus with regard to the celebrated dialogue of Plato, of which we have given an abstract: I know not how it happens: but while I am reading, I acquiesce; when I lay aside the book and reflect on the subject within myself, my conviction wholly expires^c."

We have thus traced those great outlines, which may serve to represent the form and character of the prospects, which Gentile wisdom taught mankind to entertain in relation to a future life. It will not be difficult to settle the just amount of praise which is due to such instructions. Philosophy was extolled by Plato as the noblest gift that Heaven had conferred, or could confer, upon men^d: but the re-

^a See the Supplementary Remarks.

^b Platonis Apol. Socr. ad fin.

^c Tusc. Quæst. i. 11.

^d Οὐ μείζον αγαθον ουτ' ηλθεν ουθ' ηξει ποτε τω θνητω γενει δωρηθεν εκ θεων. In Timæo, Opp. vol. ix. p. 338.

view which we have now taken will surely give us reason to prefer a very different estimate of its value by a Christian writer, who, after an examination similar to our own, eloquently deplores the degradation of the human mind in the production of such frivolous conceits, and commiserates the weakness of those who could perpetuate by literary records the memory of their folly. “O ingenia hominibus indigna, quæ has ineptias protulerunt! miseros atque miserabiles, qui stultitiam suam literis memoriæque mandaverunt^e!” Surely, the marks of a distempered and reprobate mind are more visible in these speculations, than any indications which tend to exalt the dignity of reason and of nature: and the character of those pagan teachers by whom such speculations were entertained may be correctly gathered from the words of sacred truth: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”

“It is impossible,” says Cicero, “to express any absurdity however great, which has not been maintained by some philosopher^f.” Our foregoing observations will furnish illustration of this remark. “A stronger proof,” says Warburton^g, “of the necessity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot, I think, be given than this, that the sages of Greece, with whom all the wisdom of the world was supposed to be deposited, had philosophized themselves out of the most evident and useful truth with which mankind hath any concern.”

The result of this inquiry may well serve to re-

^e Lact. Div. Inst. vi. 10.

^f De Div. ii. 58.

^g Div. Leg. iii. §. 4. p. 201.

press the arrogance of philosophy, to moderate the undue praises, and to discover the real impotence, of that faculty, which is so frequently extolled, as a competent guide in pursuing the paths of truth, of duty, and of happiness. Whether the unassisted reason of man be adequate to these necessary purposes, may best be determined by a reference to those great lights of pagan antiquity, whose splendor has for so many ages dazzled the admiration of mankind: and the sum of their performances and pretensions may, without the least injustice to them, be stated as follows: “ Whatever religious truths
 “ they possessed, these they obtained, not from rational inquiry, but from instruction. But as to
 “ the depravation of these truths (a character plainly
 “ discoverable throughout the whole tenor of their
 “ philosophy and theology) here they are justly
 “ chargeable. Whenever they attempted to demonstrate or explain their opinions, they perverted
 “ and corrupted them, and the more they commented
 “ upon truth, the more did they deprave it^h.”

From the failure of the effort, we are surely warranted in deducing the inadequacy of the power. For, according to the just observation of Dr. Ellis,
 “ that reason *should* perform that, which in its utmost perfection and its most vigorous exercise
 “ it *never did* perform, is scarcely to be distinguished
 “ from an impossibility. Nature is regular in her
 “ actings, and suffers not her powers to lie useless:
 “ never to do a thing, and not to have power to do
 “ it, are with her equivalent termsⁱ.”

^h Ellis's Knowledge of Divine Things.

ⁱ Ibid.

We are indeed in the habit of viewing the rational faculty by a deceitful light. Pagan philosophy has long enjoyed the veneration of mankind by a prescriptive, not a just, title. Under the influence of this feeling, we are apt to judge both of its own performances and of the capacities of our nature. But if we will acquaint ourselves with the truth, and frame our judgment agreeably to it, the result will teach us, not the inherent dignity, but the real blindness and corruption of the human soul. Such is our universal malady: which, like other diseases, is most fatal when it is least alarming, because the patient is then beguiled from the application of his proper remedy by a false confidence of health and vigour. We will therefore conclude our present inquiry with those remarkable words of our Redeemer, which both declare the nature of our present condition, and prescribe the only means of our recovery: “Because thou sayest, I am
“rich, and increased with goods, and have need of
“nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched,
“and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I
“counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,
“that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that
“thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy
“nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes
“with eyesalve, that thou mayest see^k.”

^k Rev. iii. 17, 18.

SECTION II.

The silence of the Mosaic law would have no tendency to eradicate from the mind of the Israelite that belief in a future state, which, independently of that law, he would have entertained in common with the rest of the world.

THE universal and constant prevalence among mankind of the belief in a future state, with the single exception of one people, has been not only acknowledged, but satisfactorily proved, by the learned Warburton. To the propriety of that exception we have already objected on a strong, though very general, ground of argument. We now propose to bestow on it a more detailed examination.

It has been the purpose of our own remarks in the foregoing section to shew, that this universality must have originated in the special will and appointment of God, and that it can have been primarily derived from no other source than Divine revelation. We are now to examine the validity of those principles, by which, as to the point at issue, this nation is distinguished from all others. For unless those principles can be maintained, the case of the Israelites will obviously fall within the operation of the general cause to which we have attributed the introduction and diffusive prevalence of this belief: and it will be also comprehended under the general design of Providence in propagating such belief among men.

It is contended, then, that the Israelites could have no knowledge of a future state, because Moses omitted to teach that doctrine¹. We maintain, on

¹ See the note, page 23 of this work.

the other hand, the true state of the case to be this: They would both have and cherish a belief of that doctrine, because Moses omitted to contradict it.

It forms a necessary part of the theory against which we contend, that this nation should be regarded as participating, till the time of Moses, in the common sentiments of mankind on this subject^m: for it is plain that their alleged ignorance, which is supposed to have been the peculiar consequence of their law, could not have existed before that law was given.

Now let it be observed, that this law required of the Israelites, in general, an abandonment of every principle and practice of false religion: and, in particular, every such principle and practice to which that people lay more particularly exposed, is therein distinctly specified and condemned. Consider, then, the situation of the Israelite when first he became the subject of a peculiar covenant. We grant, that he would find in that covenant no explicit assurance of future rewards and punishments: but it is, at least, equally certain, that he would find in it no contradiction of that doctrine. Where then would be his inducement to discard his former sentiments and hopes? He would view the code of his nation as a system of declared and irreconcilable hostility to every species of religious error: he would find the various false tenets and superstitious observances of his idolatrous neighbours enumerated and condemned in it: all and each of these he would find himself

^m It is admitted by Warburton, that till this time, they “ must needs be much prejudiced in favour of so reasonable and flattering a doctrine.” Div. Leg. vi. §. 6. vol. vi. p. 125.

distinctly enjoined to renounce : but he would not find the doctrine of future rewards and punishments in the number of them. Under such circumstances, silence must have been a confirmation, rather than a discouragement, of his belief. He would naturally infer the doctrine to be true, because Moses had not declared it to be false : for he could never imagine that his lawgiver would have passed over, as beneath his notice, that which is confessedly the most important and the most operative of all religious principles whatever.

“ We might naturally expect,” says Mr. Gibbon, “ that a principle so essential to religion would have “ been revealed in the clearest terms to the chosen “ people of Palestineⁿ.” We grant that such expectation is natural : because among other instances of that moral and intellectual corruption which belong to the fallen nature of man, we often find, that a bold presumption in judging of matters which we do not understand is more congenial to our pride, than a humble confession of ignorance and a patient inquiry after truth. But if by “ the clearest terms” we are to understand any degree of clearness beyond that which has actually been afforded, as the purpose of this writer implies ; then we must strenuously contend, that such expectation, however natural, is by no means reasonable.

For those explicit terms, of which the insertion would, in the opinion of this writer, have been so advantageous in the structure of the Mosaic law, could not have been employed consistently with the proper

ⁿ Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, c. 15.

design of that law. They would also have contravened the estimate of that design which the Israelites were intended to frame, and which they naturally would frame on a view of its present provisions.

The primary object of the Mosaic economy was, as Warburton justly expresses it, “to preserve the memory of the one true God in an idolatrous world till the coming of Christ.” Such is the notion which we, aided by evangelical light and subsequent discovery, justly entertain of the purpose contemplated in a preparatory dispensation. With regard to the immediate subjects of that economy, though they could not so well estimate its *relative* design, they would at least understand, what they were taught by many unequivocal declarations of the Pentateuch, that its leading object was, to maintain the honour and worship of the only true God to the exclusion of every false and pretended object of adoration. How was this end to be accomplished? Could the honour of the true God have been maintained by promulgating the sanction of a future and invisible retribution? The nature of the case demanded the employment of very different means: it called for a present and sensible evidence.

“The superiority of the true God,” says Dr. Graves, “could *never* be established by a comparison of his power in the distribution of future and invisible rewards and punishments; it was only by proving decisively, that he, and he alone, was the dispenser of every blessing and every calamity in the *present* life, and that he distributed them with the most consummate justice, yet tempered with mercy, that he could completely ex-

“pose, and for ever discredit the pretensions of
“idolatry.”

Under the apparently promiscuous allotments of Providence, and under that deficiency of religious light which was inseparable from the earlier progress of revelation, there had grown up, at the time of the delivery of the law, an almost universal ignorance and infidelity in regard to the proper object of religious worship. These the Divine wisdom (among other preparatory measures adopted in subserviency to the final purpose of man's redemption) judged it right to dissipate, in the case of a peculiar nation, by sensible interpositions and manifestations of the Divine power and attributes. To this end Moses, for the evidence of his authority, appeals to the mighty hand and the stretched out arm: he provides the requisite sanction of his laws, by declaring the continual interposition of the Deity in the government of the commonwealth of Israel; by promising a present reward for obedience; and by denouncing a present punishment on transgression.

On this peculiar basis the authority of the law was professedly established: and it is plain, that the sanction of a future state could never have been substituted in its place. For, how could a distinction have been provided between true and false religion by the employment of a doctrine which was common to all the religions of the world? How could a sensible evidence have been provided by an appeal to that which was distant and invisible?

The principles for which we contend being well

* Lectures on the Four last Books of the Pentateuch, P. iii. Lect. iii. p. 162.

understood by the people of Israel, the present structure of their law in regard to a future state could have generated no surprise; much less could it have induced a disbelief of that doctrine.

But might not the doctrine of a future state have been superadded, as an auxiliary to the sanction of a present retribution? We answer, that this doctrine would always subsist in union with it. Our reasons for maintaining that it would, will be stated in the following section. But we contend, that it could not have been employed as an auxiliary sanction to the Mosaical law, without weakening the force of that sanction which was actually employed, and which the nature of the case demanded. For, might not the lawgiver of Israel have appeared, in this case, as if he were distrustful of the future course of events, lest it might not verify his predictions of temporal reward and punishment? Might it not have been said, that he had employed a future state for the purpose of obviating the detection of a conscious fraud? Such was the insinuation of an atheistical writer^P, with regard to the doctrine of a future state, as it forms a part of the general system of revealed religion: but such a suspicion could never, in the mind of an Israelite, be connected with the existing structure and provisions of the Law.

We have seen, that the belief of a future state was entertained by the chosen people in common with

^P Vanini, quoted by Warburton, Div. Leg. v. note [Y]. He says, that the promises and threats of religion are made to apply to a future life, lest the imposture should be detected: “*Bona- rum et malarum actionum repromissiones pollicetur, in futura tamen vita, ne fraus detegî possit.*”

other nations, till the time when they were separated from the bulk of mankind into a distinct polity under the government of a peculiar law. The question is: How could such belief vanish from their minds? Why should they now surrender those pleasing hopes and fond desires, to which human nature is found, in general, so tenaciously to adhere? We are answered: They would no longer believe that doctrine, because Moses omitted to teach it. This is the first reason: and this we have now considered. A second may be stated as follows. The general expectation of a future state is framed on the ground of those considerations which are suggested by the present inequalities of Providence: but the chosen seed were under an extraordinary providence, and therefore the grounds of such belief could not occur to them: they would therefore discard the sentiment, and more especially when they found that their law had made no express discoveries respecting it.

We grant then, that the ordinary providence of the world is characterized by great inequality: we admit, that this inequality, if rightly viewed, furnishes strong confirmation to the belief of future rewards and punishments: we also admit, that the providence which governed the temporal affairs of the chosen seed was an extraordinary providence. But this, we contend, would in no degree nullify the general grounds for the belief of a future state. For in order to prove that it would, it is necessary to shew, that this peculiar system of Divine government was not only an *extraordinary*, but an *equal*, providence. Thus indeed the matter is represented

by Warburton, by whom the words *extraordinary* providence and *equal* providence are constantly employed as equivalent terms^a. I cannot hesitate to say, that the argument thus employed carries in it an egregious fallacy; and the fallacy consists in confounding the ideas of difference and contrariety. If the extraordinary providence of the Israelites differed from the ordinary providence of the world in general, it does not follow that the former must be equal because the latter is unequal. The substance of the reasoning framed upon this assumption I have given above: but it may be more satisfactory to present it in the words of that distinguished writer, from whom on this point I am compelled to differ.

“ While God exactly distributed his rewards and
“ punishments *here*, the light of reason directed men
“ to look no further for the sanctions of his laws.
“ But when it came to be seen that he was *not al-*
“ *ways* a rewarder and a punisher *here*, men neces-
“ sarily concluded, from his moral attributes, that he
“ would be so *hereafter*: and consequently, that this
“ life was but a small portion of the human dura-
“ tion.——In this manner was a future state

^a —— “ I used, throughout my whole discourse of the Jewish
“ economy, the words *extraordinary providence* and *equal provi-*
“ *dence* as equivalent terms.” Note [A A.] to book v. of the Div.
Leg. As an example, we may take the following: “ We have
“ shewn at large, in the first three books, that under a *common or*
“ *unequal* providence, civil government could not be supported
“ without a religion teaching a future state of reward and punish-
“ ment. And it is the great purpose of this work to prove, that
“ the Mosaic religion wanting that doctrine, the Jews must *really*
“ have enjoyed that *equal* providence, under which holy Scripture

“brought, by natural light, into religion : and from
 “thenceforth became a necessary part of it. But
 “under the Jewish theocracy, God was an exact
 “rewarder and punisher *here*. Natural light there-
 “fore evinced, that under such an administration,
 “the subjects of it did not become liable to *future*
 “punishments till this sanction was known amongst
 “them ^r.”

The equal providence of the Jews has, indeed, become a familiar term of theology : but if I mistake not, the notion conveyed by such language will be found upon examination to have no existence in reality, nor any countenance from scripture. The sequel will illustrate the danger which arises from first calling a thing by a wrong name, and then reasoning about it.

It was, as we have already stated, the great object of the Israelitish economy to maintain the honour of the one true God, and to silence the pretensions of polytheism and idolatry. The means employed for the attainment of this end consisted in continued interpositions of Divine power, for the purpose of evincing and attesting, in the *visible* retribution of both obedience and transgression, the real existence, the unity, and attributes of God. These interpositions were carried into effect in such a manner as fully to answer the purpose we have now described. But that they displayed an

“represents them to have lived : and then, *no transgressor*
 “*escaping punishment, nor any observer of the law missing his re-*
 “*ward*, human affairs might be kept in good order without the
 “doctrine of a future state.” Book v. §. 5. p. 164.

^r Div. Leg. Appendix to B. v. p. 227, 229.

allotment of temporal good and evil, so equal and exact that nothing was left to be rectified in a future state; this neither was, nor could be, the fact. It is historically false, and it involves contradiction and impossibility in itself.

It belongs essentially to the notion of a providence administered on such principles, that it should frequently inflict a sudden and premature destruction on the wicked. Now it cannot be disputed that this would in many instances be attended with aggravated hardship and suffering to the virtuous and obedient: and if so, it would change, and perhaps even multiply, but certainly not obviate, the present appearances of inequality. The interests of good and bad men are, in the present state of things, necessarily interwoven together, like the roots of wheat and of tares in a field. In the parable which our Lord delivered on this subject^s, we find that the servants of the householder proposed to gather up the tares: but the householder replies, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." We may from hence learn one reason why Divine justice does not always immediately execute sentence on an evil work: it is, because such a proceeding would tend to aggravate the distresses of those, whom the mercy of God is pleased to regard as objects of favour rather than of punishment^t. Yet we are to observe, that such

^s Matt. xiii.

^t See a discourse on this subject in "Sermons by Charles Wheatly, Author of the Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer."

aggravated distress would often be the necessary effect of that peculiar government which the Deity exercised over the people of Israel: for there, the sudden punishment of the wicked was frequently inflicted in a remarkable manner, so as to involve in it the suffering of those, who, in regard to that particular crime which provoked the Divine vengeance, were wholly unoffending. How then could it be said, that the present inequalities of providence were in this case taken out of sight? or that the hopes which we are apt to connect with the observation of them would in this case be annulled?

If we would inquire into the matter historically, we shall find the same truth established on the most decided evidence. So far was the condition of the Israelites from exhibiting an equal distribution of temporal good and evil, that it was on the contrary characterized by circumstances of peculiar inequality, which are not to be met with in the case of any other people. There is no other nation as to whom we find that it was a declared principle of the Divine government, to include the suffering of the innocent in the punishment of the guilty: yet this was a declared principle of that peculiar government, which God himself administered as the political chief and ruler of Israel. To the subjects of that commonwealth, in distinction from all the other families of the earth, he was made known as a God “who visits “the sins of the fathers on the children.” As a general rule of the Divine government, this mode of punishing transgression was confined to this single nation, and among them limited to the very time in

which Warburton supposes them to have been without the doctrine of future rewards and punishments^u.

To such a system inequalities would necessarily belong. Nor can it be thought, that they would be of such rare occurrence, as never to strike the attention or engage the thoughts of men. For the principle on which they were founded was not only acknowledged, but complained of. That "the way of the Lord is not equal," was a generally prevailing murmur against the Divine dispensations: and the instance of inequality alleged is thus expressed; "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge^x." Surely this was the language of a people peculiarly struck with those appearances, which afford, in common estimation, so conclusive a topic for the proof of a future state.

It is to be observed, that this complaint does not occur till a late period in the history of the Israelites. How is this to be explained? for the state of things to which it refers had all along prevailed from the very foundation of their commonwealth, and was, indeed, the necessary effect of a declared principle in the Divine administration of it. The following appears to be the most reasonable account of the matter. The period to which we refer was distinguished by an extreme and widely prevailing corruption of that people: for both the national ini-

^u That is, from the giving of the Law to the captivity of Judah. In the Law itself the rule is first declared, Exod. xx. 5.: about the time of the captivity the abrogation of it is foretold by Jeremiah and announced by Ezekiel. Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 3.

^x Ezek. xviii.

quity and the Divine forbearance had nearly reached their utmost point, and the storm of vengeance, which had long been gathering with the increase of their provocations, was ready to burst on their heads. In such a condition of society, the disbelief of a future state, having a natural tendency to harmonize with the prevailing manners, might probably be for the first time embraced as a popular sentiment^y: for it is a sentiment which finds a congenial soil chiefly in the heart which hates to be reformed, and which would gladly dismiss the terrors of a prospect of which it has forfeited the consolation. Thus, by the prevailing impiety of the time and people, and by the infidelity which it would generate, was probably occasioned the first introduction of this complaint against the equity of the Divine proceedings: since it is plain, that the doctrine of a future state at once obviates every harsh appearance, and every ground of discontent, in the system of punishing the parent in the sufferings of his issue. Yet it is about this very time that Warburton supposes the doctrine of a future state to have first emerged into general prevalence among this people: a time which might with greater justice be regarded as the era, which gave birth to those monstrous principles of infidelity, which, in a subsequent age, became the avowed tenets belonging to the heresy of the Sadducees.

With regard to the allotments of temporal good

^y “Crassam istam de animæ mortalitate hæresin, in populum
“Israeliticum tum demum introductam probabile est, cum et pie-
“tas et notitia Dei apud ipsos imminui cœpta, ac rerum cœles-
“tium cura terrestrium posthabita.” Pococke. *Notæ Misc.* in
Portam Mosis, p. 161. vol. i. of his works, ed. 1740.

and evil under the extraordinary providence, we may admit, that they were dispensed on a system of regularity, and that they were exempted from those appearances of a promiscuous dispensation which characterize the general face of human affairs: but they were by no means exempted from those inequalities on which we are accustomed to ground the expectation of a future life. This will be evident, from examining more attentively the essential principle, by which this peculiar form of the Divine government was distinguished from the more prevailing mode of its exercise.

In observing the general administration of providence, we are not warranted in regarding calamities in the light of punishments specially inflicted on those whom they befall, nor in construing them as an evidence or a penal consequence of individual guilt: because we know that the moral administration of the Deity is not conducted on such a principle. "Suppose ye," says our Lord, "that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay.—Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay^z." But while the theocracy of the Israelites was in its vigour, the case was very different: and the subjects of that government were obliged to regard many of the calamities they witnessed, whether private or national, in the light of punishments. The fact is, that in the latter case

^z Luke xiii.

these calamities were *judicially* inflicted, and wore the complexion of legal penalties. The law explicitly denounced them. When they happened, the law also indicated the reason of their occurrence ; and that reason was in many cases confirmed by a special revelation of the Divine purpose which had been contemplated in them. The judicial function was exercised by God : but the principle of it was the same with that of human judicature. With regard to the latter, it would be absurd to say, that it operates to remove the inequalities connected with the present circumstances of good and bad men. On the contrary, it will, in numberless instances, be found to multiply them. A guilty parent, for example, is carried off prematurely by the sentence of the law : and the consequence is, that a numerous family are plunged into the deepest anguish and disgrace, though they may possibly have been wholly unoffending, or even highly virtuous. Thus, one is overtaken by a just punishment, and many are involved in unmerited suffering. Now it cannot be denied, that similar effects must necessarily and essentially flow from every judicial system, howsoever it may be administered : and with regard to that which God himself exercised over the Israelites by an extraordinary providence, it was so far from obviating these inequalities, that it positively and professedly employed them as an effectual means of strengthening the authority of the Divine law.

A few examples may here be properly adduced for the proof and illustration of these remarks. In the war against the Canaanites, Achan secreted a part of the spoil of Jericho. The crime was that of

an *individual*; but the “anger of the Lord was kindled against *the children of Israel*,” and their army was punished with a defeat by the enemy. And, when the offender is brought to light, his whole family, though nothing is said which charges them with being accessory to his guilt, are involved in the same destruction with himself^a. The sin of David in numbering the people was punished by the destruction of seventy thousand persons: but these persons were so far from being implicated in the act of their sovereign, that the offender himself says, with regard to them, “Lo, I have sinned, “and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what “have they done^b?” The apostasy of Jeroboam was punished by the death of his son: and the son was especially selected as the subject of a premature death, by reason of those very qualities which enjoyed the Divine approbation^c. The idolatry of Solomon was punished in the calamities of his son’s reign^d. I will only add, that the principle was maintained in cases of reward, as well as of punishment. Of this Solomon was himself an example: for the judgment which his sin had provoked was suspended during his own life, as the reward of his father’s piety^e.

In these instances, the nature of the extraordinary providence is so illustrated, as at once to confirm our description of it, and to make it evident, that such an administration could never operate to veil the prospect of a future life. Temporal bless-

^a Josh. vii.

^b 2 Sam. xxiv.

^c 1 Kings xiv. 13.

^d 1 Kings xi. 11.

^e 1 Kings xi. 12.

ings and calamities are here dispensed by special and manifest interpositions on a declared principle of judicial retribution. Like the public proceedings of corrective justice, they have an obvious reference to the conduct which occasioned them. Like them also, they declare the authority of the ruler and judge. In this, we contend, the providence of the Israelites differed from the ordinary providence of mankind. But this, as we also discover from those striking examples which have just been adduced, would not obviate, but rather increase, the present inequalities belonging to the dispensation of temporal good and evil. The reasoning, therefore, in favour of a future state, which we are accustomed to frame on the ground of these inequalities, would be left, in the case of the Israelites, in its unimpaired strength: and the extraordinary providence by which they were governed would never operate in conjunction with the reserve of their law, to the suppression of that doctrine.

Under such a system of things, the manifest interference of God for the reward of obedience would be striking and influential wherever it was known: and the judgments of his severity would be the more alarming, and therefore the more operative, because the innocent would often be involved in the same destruction with the guilty. Such an administration would therefore be fully effectual to the purpose which was contemplated in it: namely, that of maintaining the honour of the true God by continual interpositions of his power in conformity with the declarations of his law. Nor would the inequalities thus occasioned in any degree derogate from the truth

and authority of a system which professed the manifest retribution of obedience and transgression: because these cases of inequality formed a part of the sanction of the Law itself, and the denunciations of the Lawgiver were so framed, as to convey an assurance that they would frequently arise.

God is the author of everlasting life. In this character he stands related to all mankind. But this is not the character in which he stood peculiarly related to the seed of Jacob. To them, exclusively, he was made known as the dispenser of temporal rewards and punishments. In this character he acted, as the political head and ruler of their national government. The peculiar nature of that government, and the station which God was pleased to fill in it, would both concur, to produce an expectation of nothing further than temporal rewards and punishments, as the sanction of those ordinances by which they were governed: for political sanctions are always of this nature^f. But this would in no degree tend to annihilate the belief of those other rewards and punishments, which are more accordant with the universal relation subsisting between him and the whole race of mankind: nor would it suppress the anticipation of any proceedings which he

^f “Deo visum est, inter Israelitas regis politici nomen et personam sumere, et omnia ad morem principis secularis in regno illo administrare.—Cum leges suas dedit, subditos ejus, (*principum secularium ritu*) præmiis et pœnis *vitam hanc caducam solummodo afficientibus*, ad earum obedientiam sollicitavit: nam præmium cæleste proponere, personæ regis civilis quam Deus acceperat, parum convenire videbatur.” Spencer de Legibus Ritualibus Hebræorum, lib. i. cap. iv. p. 45. ed. 1727.

might be expected to adopt as the judge of the whole earth. Yet I see not how this consequence could have been avoided, if eternal life had been the sanction of the Law : for in that case it would have been an obvious conclusion, that all but the subjects of the Mosaical economy were shut out from that transcendent benefit.

It is hardly necessary to add, that though the notion of an equal providence over the Israelites were admitted, it would never warrant the inference which is drawn from it. Even on this supposition, they must have had as much reason to believe a future state as any other people had. How could it be otherwise, unless they were persuaded that the same exact and equal administration had prevailed in all past ages, and was actually in force among all other nations? But the contrary of this would appear, both from the sacred records they possessed, and from their own observation : and they well knew the extraordinary providence (whatever character might belong to it in regard to the subject of our present discussion) to be restricted and peculiar to their own theocratical polity. If indeed the disbelief of a future state had been the consequence of this theocratical government, it must have discovered itself in the form of an inference which applied exclusively to themselves ; they must have regarded themselves only as shut out from the hope of a future life, for among them only did that government exist : a monstrous supposition, as it applies to a nation, who were taught to consider themselves eminently favoured. The absurdity involved in it can only be equalled, by supposing them to have reasoned

thus : Because we receive our rewards and punishments here, therefore the rest of mankind can have no reason to expect them hereafter.

Such are the reasons on which we ground our conclusion, that the silence or reserve of the law of Moses would not tend to efface from the minds of the Israelites their belief of a future retribution. These reasons it was necessary to state, for the purpose of clearing away obstructions from the path on which we are about to enter : but the inference we deduce from them will be most powerfully corroborated by the considerations which we shall offer in the following section.

It was the object of a former part of this treatise to shew, that a more explicit announcement of a future state in the Law would have been inconsistent with the purpose of the Gospel, to which the Law was a preparatory dispensation. We have now seen, that it would have been equally inconsistent with the immediate purpose of the Law itself. On the whole, we affirm, that it would in every respect have violated that consistency which is now discernible in the plan of revelation, and have deranged those proportions in which the several parts of the Divine economy stand related to each other, and united into one body.

SECTION III.

The writings of Moses were specially adapted to countenance the belief in a future state.

WE have now exhibited a view of those general sources, in which we conceive that the doctrine of a

future state, considered as an universal principle of religion, must have originated. We have stated our reasons for maintaining, that no deviation from the general belief would have resulted, in the case of the Israelites, from the absence of any clear discoveries in the Pentateuch. Our present design is to shew, that the Pentateuch, though it conveys no explicit assurances respecting that doctrine, was nevertheless specially adapted to encourage the belief of it.

Though we have endeavoured to account for its general reception on principles which apply equally to all mankind ; yet it will not suffice, if we would rightly estimate the case of the Israelites, to content ourselves with merely admitting, that they were, as to this particular, on a common footing with others. For it must appear, in fact, that they enjoyed a most distinguished advantage over the whole Gentile world.

In the first place, to them were committed the oracles of God. Hence would they be enabled to form a juster notion of the hopes which God afforded for the comfort of mankind, than the heathen, whose accounts of the early world came to them mutilated and disfigured in their passage through a traditionary channel.

If we suppose the belief of a future state to have originated in those transactions of the antediluvian world to which we have adverted, and to have been orally transmitted through the medium of Noah to his posterity ; it is plain, that the authentic records of sacred truth must have conferred a signal advantage on those who possessed them. The primary grounds of that belief must, on this supposition, have

been as well known to the Israelites, as they were to those who lived in the very times to which those transactions belong. Whereas, in the Gentile world, this belief would rest on no other foundation than tradition; and such tradition would probably be the more dubious, from want of knowledge respecting the source of its propagation, and the credit to which it was consequently entitled.

But should we admit, that this belief did not take its rise from the transactions to which we refer; it must still be maintained, that such transactions could never have been reasonably viewed by a mind which cherished the principles of true religion, without that explanation, which the doctrine of a future state was alone competent to afford. The circumstances connected with the death of Abel, for instance, would, without this doctrine, have been sufficient to extinguish every religious motive and feeling.

Another favourable distinction would accrue to the Israelite from the same cause. As the depository of holy writ, his mind would be enlightened by a correct knowledge of the Divine attributes, while the most erroneous conceptions prevailed respecting them among the idolatrous nations. Hence would he be enabled to estimate, more justly than the other could, the character of those proceedings which the Deity might reasonably be expected to adopt. That nothing was contemplated in the Divine purpose, beyond that indiscriminate allotment of temporal good and evil which he witnessed in the present condition of the world, is an opinion, in which a mind thus instructed would not readily acquiesce. The force of such an argument could

not have been so sensibly felt under the influence of Pagan superstition, which conveyed the most false and distorted representations of the moral attributes of the Deity.

Proper sentiments respecting these attributes may, indeed, be sufficiently familiar, where the advantages of revealed religion have been habitually enjoyed. But would such sentiments have been at all compatible with those bad passions and malignant propensities, which paganism ascribed to its false deities? Would they have derived any countenance from the perverse disputings and wild speculations of Gentile philosophy? Whether we regard the theology or the philosophy of the heathen, we cannot but recognise a deplorable inferiority in the knowledge they possessed of the Divine perfections, when contrasted with the light which revelation imparted to the Israelites. A corresponding advantage must then have existed on the side of the latter, as to their power of judging respecting the conduct, which an all-perfect Being might be expected to adopt towards his rational and accountable creatures. The Israelite, under such circumstances, would be the last to suppose, that, as no distinction was to be found in the present condition of men, so none would be made hereafter, between the obedient servant of God and the presumptuous transgressor of his law.

But we have already maintained the incompetence of human reason to gather the doctrine of future reward, from a combined regard to the moral attributes of God and the promiscuous allotments of our present state. What has been thus contended for as an universal position, may appear

to be contradicted by our present remarks : since it is here asserted, that the Israelite *would* have derived this inference from the same considerations.

But it is to be observed, that the reasoning in the former instance proceeded on a supposition, that the powers of reason were wholly unassisted ; a supposition which is clearly inadmissible in the case of the Israelite.

In the former instance, indeed, we supposed the moral attributes of the Deity to be discoverable by reason, and that they were actually known from rational inquiry to the disciple of the religion of nature. (This assumption, however, is purely hypothetical : for we stop not here to inquire, whether a knowledge of the moral attributes of God really is, or is not, attainable by unassisted reason.) In the case of the Israelite, the same attributes are supposed to be known through the discovery of revelation.

Thus far, then, the Israelite and the disciple of natural religion are regarded as enjoying the same advantage ; though the advantage, in each case respectively, be derived from a very different source. But we must also attend to what the Israelite had peculiarly of his own : for it is on the ground of this distinction that the proof of a future state will appear conclusive in his case, and inconclusive in the other.

The light of nature and the exercise of reason could never convey to the disciple of natural religion an assurance, that God would pardon sin upon repentance. To be capable of pardon, is a benefit de-

rived to man through the death of Christ. Now it will not be pretended that human reason could attain, by its own efforts, a foreknowledge of that meritorious sacrifice: it could therefore form no just expectation of the benefit which was to result from it, since that sacrifice is the appointed channel of conveying pardon to transgressors. But to the Israelite, the will of God in regard to this particular had been revealed: for to him the Deity had expressly made himself known, as a God “forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin^g.”

From these general considerations, we will pass on to an examination of certain separate portions of the sacred text. We shall thus be enabled both to display the grounds, and to illustrate the character, of that belief in a future state, which the subjects of the Mosaic economy would deduce from the book of their law. The result, we trust, will make it appear, that their hopes respecting that state were designed, according to the purpose of revelation, to centre in the same point with our own: our faith being established on a past event, theirs on a future prospect, but both of them meeting in the person of a Redeemer: the structure of the revealed word being so framed, that the promise of a Messiah should be understood to comprise within it the promise of everlasting life; and that the hope of everlasting life might be afforded, only in connexion with faith in him, who, in the fulness of time, was to purchase it for mankind. “Search the

^g Exod. xxxiv. 7.

“Scriptures,” says our Lord; “for in them ye think
“ye have ETERNAL LIFE: and they are they
“which testify OF ME^h.”

First, let us advert to those remarkable words in God’s covenant with Abraham: “In thy seed shall
“all the nations of the earth be blessedⁱ.” Here is the promise of a most important benefit to the whole race of mankind. We are to consider, in what sense this promise would be understood by the subject of the Mosaic law. For we can hardly imagine an apathy so great, as to be indifferent respecting the meaning of words which carry such an awakening interest: nor can we easily suppose, that the promise itself was designed to convey no meaning beyond a mere abstraction of the mind. Could he then construe it into a promise of temporal prosperity? That, indeed, was the blessing annexed to his own peculiar law. But he could not have the slightest reason to imagine, that it was the purpose of God to deal with all other nations after the same manner. He must indeed have had good foundation for believing the contrary: since he could not but know, that some of the greatest saints and most eminent favourites of God had been deeply afflicted. It is also plain, and it deserves particular remark, that, with regard to even his own share and interest in the universal blessing, the Law of Moses would not permit him to view it in any forms of worldly prosperity. Of these he could justly hope for no augmentation: for these the Law itself conveyed to him, in the fullest manner of which the state of human life is capable, as the pre-

^h John v. 39.

ⁱ Gen. xxii. 18. and xii. 3.

sent reward of fulfilling its injunctions : riches, long life, and victory over his enemies, being the promises annexed to his obedience. His anticipations of bliss in the advent of the Messiah must therefore, if they were reasonably framed, have been fixed upon something wholly distinct from the pleasures and possessions of this life. If, on the other hand, he viewed the promised blessing in relation to a future existence, then abundant reason must have occurred to countenance his interpretation. For, let it be observed, a blessing is here holden forth in distant prospect as the future portion of a race, on whom it had previously been denounced, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What else could be understood as the import of the blessing thus promised to all the posterity of Adam, than a mitigation of the curse which had passed upon them in the person of their progenitor and representative? The same unchangeable Being who pronounces the decree of death, is he who foretells a blessing on that entire race who had been included in the previous malediction. The curse was known to the Israelite, and the blessing would naturally be construed with reference to it. He would not suppose them to be blessed, in a sense worthy of the Divine veracity, who were for ever subject to the effects of such a malediction. At the same time, his belief in the immutability of God would not allow him to expect a total reversal of the sentence. What then would remain, but to ground on the benediction of Abraham a hope that the effects of that sentence would be mitigated? that is, a hope of future existence. Such a hope would be consistent,

on the one hand, with the mercy and promises of God, and on the other, with his veracity and denunciations ; and it would also be agreeable to those intimations respecting a future state, which were afforded by the previous transactions of the sacred history.

This view of the subject will derive both strength and clearness from the following remarks of a highly distinguished prelate. “ What distinct notion Abraham had of the blessing promised to all nations through him and his seed, what he thought of the manner and method by which it should be effected, we cannot pretend to say. But that he understood it to be a promise of restoring mankind, and delivering them from the remaining curse of the fall, there can be little doubt. He knew that death had entered by sin ; he knew that God had promised victory and redemption to the seed of the woman : upon the hopes of this restoration the religion of his ancestors was founded ; and when God, from whom this blessing on all men was expected, did expressly promise a blessing on all men, and in this promise founded his everlasting covenant, what could Abraham else expect but the completion in his seed of that ancient promise and prophecy, concerning the victory to be obtained by the woman’s seed ? The curse of the ground was expiated by the flood, and the earth restored with a blessing, which was the foundation of the temporal covenant with Noah ; a large share of which God expressly grants to Abraham and his posterity particularly, together with a promise, by their means to bring a new and fur-

“ther blessing upon the whole race of men. Lay
 “these things together, and say what less could be
 “expected from the new promise or prophecy given
 “to Abraham, than a deliverance from that part of
 “the curse still remaining on man, *Dust thou art,*
 “*and to dust thou shalt return?* In virtue of this
 “covenant, Abraham and his posterity had reason
 “to expect, that the time would come, when man
 “should *be called from his dust again* : for this ex-
 “pectation they had his assurance who gave the
 “covenant, that he would be their God for ever ^k.”

The blessing of Abraham must then have been understood, both by himself and his descendants, as having a regard to the same event with that primeval declaration of mercy, by which a future triumph over the serpent was promised to the seed of the woman : and like that declaration itself, it would be interpreted to signify an ultimate recovery from the effect of that sentence, which had been pronounced on the occasion of man's first transgression.

Subsequently to the date of this patriarchal benediction, we find in the sacred records a long and connected series of prophetic declarations relating to the Messiah. These prophecies are marked in their progress by increasing degrees of clearness, by greater fulness of description, and by fresh limitations as to time, place, and other circumstances which may serve to fix and determine the person and event to which they refer : but an uniformity of character runs through them all, in their apparent reference to the same subject. These successive predictions

^k Sherlock's Discourses on Prophecy.

would be understood by the Israelite as having a regard to the earliest promise and to the blessing of Abraham; and as being descriptive of a person in whom the benefit, of which a prospect had been afforded in those previous discoveries, was to be realized to mankind. Thus, the blessing of Abraham is transmitted to Isaac, and afterwards to Jacob¹. The subject of the three benedictions is manifestly the same; but the successive announcements of it are marked by a fresh limitation, relating to the family in which the blessing was to arise. The last mentioned patriarch repeats the promise in these remarkable words: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come^m." Here again the subject of the prophecy is the same; but a new limitation is introduced with regard to time. Thus also, in the later ages of the Israelitish church, all those sublime anticipations of Christ's evangelical kingdom, which are contained in the writings of David, of Isaiah, of Daniel, of Micah, of Haggai, and of other prophets, could be justly regarded, in their general tenor and design, as repetitions only of the promise which had been indirectly conveyed in the malediction of the serpent, and afterwards more expressly declared to Abraham. These repetitions may have derived their propriety from any occasions of deep distress and despondency, the effects of which they may have been designed to counteract by the revival of a faint and languishing hope: or they may have been afforded with a regard to those times and seasons,

¹ Gen. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14.

^m Gen. xlix. 10.

which by the Divine wisdom were judged suitable to the disclosure of particular circumstances and characters belonging to the person and office of the Redeemer, of which an earlier discovery would have been unseasonable and premature. But still, with whatever enlargements, modifications, or restrictions, they were expressed, they must, with regard to their leading subject, have been in the strictest sense of the word considered as repetitions. A number of successive prophecies, each of them relating to one future event of supreme and paramount importance to all mankind, would naturally be interpreted as having a relation to the *same* event. This conclusion will appear irresistible, when it is considered, that nothing is any where suggested by which the mind would be led to distinguish the subject of one of these evangelical predictions from that of another. Several of these predictions are contained in the writings of Isaiah; but in no one of them is it hinted, that the blessing which forms the subject of that, is different from the blessing which forms the subject of the others. Daniel foretells the same blissful event: but his prophecy contains not the slightest intimation, that the blessing, of which he announces the prospect, was any other than that, which had been already spoken of by Isaiah. The same general principle might, if it were necessary, be further illustrated, by references to other passages in the prophetic writings.

Nor, indeed, if we duly estimate the plans of Divine wisdom, can it be thought agreeable to the purpose of Scripture prophecy, that any uncertainty should have been intended to exist, with regard to

the various predictions of the Messiah which were afforded in successive ages to the Jewish church, whether the same or different events were denoted by them : concurring, as those representations do, in representing the incomparably momentous importance of the subject to which they severally relate.

There are two peculiarities observable in the predictions of the Messiah contained in the Old Testament, of which an attentive consideration will contribute to strengthen the position we wish to establish.

The later prophecies of this class are so constructed, that the Messiah, to whom they relate, appears to be spoken of as a subject previously familiar to the mind. They seem designed, not to introduce the mention of his character to such as were strangers to the prospect of his advent, so much as to disclose some fresh particular among the important circumstances connected with it. Take for example the benediction of Judah, which we have already cited. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come^m." The Messiah is here designated by the term "Shiloh," or "he that is sent." We are not told, as if in a first information, *that a Messiah shall be sent*. That is assumed as a matter already known and understood. And the prophecy appears designed, as much to fix a time for the accomplishment of the promise which it announces, as to confirm and establish the validity of the promise itself. It is added, "And unto him shall the gathering of the people

^m Gen. xlix. 10.

“ be.” Here also the same observation applies. This latter clause, like the former, is a repetition. It refers to the prophetic benediction of Jacob himself by his father: “ Let people serve thee, and nations “ bow down to theeⁿ.” But in this latter instance, an additional and very important circumstance is connected with the matter of the earlier prediction ; which is, that the benediction contained in the last cited words, and which was to take effect among the descendants of Jacob, should be realized, either in Shiloh, or in Judah, from whom the Messiah, ordained to have dominion over all nations, was to go forth. This application of the two prophecies to the same subject will derive confirmation from the sublime strains of the evangelical prophet, who describes the reign of the Messiah agreeably to the tenor of them both : “ It shall come to pass in the “ last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house “ shall be established in the top of the mountains, “ and shall be exalted above the hills ; *and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall “ go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the “ mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of “ Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we “ will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go “ forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Je- “ rusalem. And he shall judge among the na- “ tions, and shall rebuke many people*.” The blessing which Jacob pronounces on his son Judah may therefore be paraphrased thus. He may be un-

ⁿ Gen. xxvii. 29.

^o Isaiah ii. 2, 3, 4. See also Micah iv. 1, 2.

derstood to say : God has promised, that in my seed all mankind shall be blessed : this shall be realized before Judah as a nation shall have ceased to rule over his sons : before that time, he who is sent as the promised blessing shall appear. And whereas it has also been promised, that people and nations shall serve and obey me ; this also shall be verified in Shiloh ; the gathering and obedience of the nations shall be to him my descendant^p.

We will adduce one more example for the illustration of our subject. By the prophet Haggai the approaching season of man's redemption is thus announced. " Yet once, it is a little while, and I will " shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and " the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and " *the desire of all nations* shall come." Here again the expression is different from that which we should expect, in relation to a subject newly introduced. The Messiah is spoken of as " the desire of all nations," in a character, which, from the turn of the language, seems to have been previously and generally understood : and an allusion seems to be made to that earlier prediction of the promised seed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Thus would the subject of the two prophecies be identified in the contemplation of those by whom they were known and duly considered : and the latter of them would be understood to point the expectation of the Jews, not solely to the Messiah himself, (for he was expected before,) but chiefly to the

^p See Bishop Newton's Dissertations on Prophecy, Diss. III. and IV. pp. 49, and 66. ed. 1811.

time when he was to appear, and the place which was to be glorified by his presence. So the prophet continues his strain: "And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts^q."

Secondly, the similarity of description which is observable in many of these predictions would serve as a guide to the identity of their subject. Take for example the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah, in which, among other expressions of similar import, it is declared, respecting the Redeemer of men, "that his soul should be made an offering for sin^r." In agreement with this earlier prophecy, it is declared by Daniel, that after a certain period "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself^s." The later prophecy determines the period which was fixed for the accomplishment of the earlier: but the description of the event foretold discovers a correspondence with the previous description which had been given by Isaiah, and would therefore have been regarded as an evidence, that the event severally predicted by the two prophets was the same.

It remains for us to apply the foregoing remarks to the subject of this inquiry.

It has been our design to elucidate, in the later prophecies of the Messiah, their connection with, and dependence on, the earlier: our purpose being,

^q Haggai ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. ^r Isaiah liii. 10. ^s Dan. ix. 26.

to illustrate the identity of the subject to which they would all be understood to relate. We have endeavoured to maintain, that this connection and dependence would, by every reasonable mind, be had in view in the interpretation of their design. The field of illustration has indeed been extended beyond the limits of the Mosaic writings. But if the principle contended for shall appear applicable to the whole chain of evangelical prophecy which reaches from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament, certainly the validity of its application cannot be questioned with respect to those links of the chain which are to be found in the Pentateuch alone.

On the ground of this principle then we contend, that every successive prediction of the Messiah would justly be viewed as containing the promise of a future life. We have shewn, that the victory which was promised to the seed of the woman could in no other way have been reasonably understood, than as intended to denote a triumph over death, and a resumption of immortality. We have also shewn, that the blessing of Abraham could be justly viewed only as having regard to the felicity of a future life. The consequence is manifest. If every succeeding prophecy of the Messiah would be understood with reference to these two earliest prophecies, and construed as a republication of them, then every such prophecy must have been regarded, as tacitly comprising in it the doctrine of a future state.

I will only observe in conclusion, that the evidence of a future state afforded to the Israelites, being such as we have now described, was so framed

as to obviate a gross and dangerous misconception, which would naturally have arisen from making it the appropriate sanction of the Levitical law. In the latter case, the subjects of that law could hardly fail to regard the promise of eternal life, as a benefit restricted to themselves and denied to the rest of mankind. But this error would derive no countenance from the views which the writings of Moses actually discover. The first promise of a triumph over the serpent, could have been reasonably construed only in unison with that declaration of the Apostle, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ " shall *all* be made alive^t." The blessings of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, embraced all the families of the earth, and that of Judah was equally comprehensive. In these blessings the promise of eternal life is virtually and intelligibly conveyed. The later declarations of Scripture were of an uniform character, and the general tenor of it was calculated to regulate the expectation of a future state agreeably to the truest conceptions of God's holy and merciful attributes: "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, " and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him^u."

^t 1 Cor. xv. 22. ^u Acts x. 34, 35.

CHAPTER V.

VIEW OF A PARTICULAR PROVISION BY WHICH THE BELIEF
IN A FUTURE STATE WAS GUARDED FROM AFFORDING
COUNTEenance TO OPINIONS INCONSISTENT WITH TRUE
RELIGION.

THAT the promise of eternal life formed no part of the Mosaical covenant ; and that the writings of the Israelitish lawgiver contain no explicit declarations relating to that subject : are principles, on a recognition of which the present inquiry hath all along proceeded. It has however been contended, that the subjects of that covenant were not, as to this essential point of religious doctrine, excluded from participating in the general hopes of mankind. With a view to substantiate this latter position, we have, first, taken a view of the sources from which the Israelites, in common with other nations, must have derived their knowledge of a future state ; and secondly, we have exhibited a distinct foundation, on which the hopes of the former were peculiarly established.

As a measure auxiliary to the general design of this treatise, it will be proper, in the next place, to notice a provision, which was calculated at once to confirm the hope of a future life, and to obviate the perversion of that hope : so that the prospect of immortal happiness as the reward of well doing, might be guarded from all association with opinions, which derogate from the freedom of Divine grace and contradict the scheme of redemption. That the language of explicit promise and direct assertion would

naturally have been wrested to the support of these erroneous sentiments, we have endeavoured to evince. And it will not be unreasonable to suppose, that these same sentiments may have derived some degree of countenance from the bare existence and prevalence of the doctrine of a future state, even though that doctrine could not have alleged the sanction of a Divine promise. If therefore any provision shall appear to have been made, which has a manifest tendency to counteract these mistaken and dangerous views, it must necessarily be considered as having a strong claim to our attention in the consideration of this subject.

SECTION I.

Origin of Sacrifice.

IF we direct our attention to the prominent features in the religious character of the world, as they discover themselves in that long succession of ages which intervened between the fall of man and the death of Christ; we cannot fail of being struck with an endless variety in the prevailing forms of worship and systems of belief. In the patriarchal ages and under the Law, we find both the creed and the practice of mankind diversified in the process of time by fresh communications of Divine truth, distinguished at later periods by a greater fulness than those which had been granted to foregoing generations. In the tenets and observances of the heathen, we meet with a still greater diversity, characterized throughout by the wild and fantastic workings of human folly, superstition, and wickedness. But,

however glaring the general disagreement, still the eye, while surveying the multitude of dissimilar forms which are crowded in the wide expanse, recognises a few circumstances of striking uniformity. Some particulars of agreement may be discerned in the records of every age comprehended within the specified period, and, with very rare and questionable exceptions, in those of every nation under heaven. Such are the belief of a God, and the doctrine of a future state : to which also we may add, the observance of sacrifice. This observance rises in point of time to the very highest antiquity, and reaches in extent throughout the whole inhabited world, wherever any vestiges of religion have been discovered.

The prevalence of this rite having been commensurate with the belief in a future retribution, afforded therefore a suitable corrective to any errors which might have been grafted upon it. It was adapted to silence the plea of human merit, and to bring out to view (as far as man, in the early and imperfect stages of a progressive scheme, was capable of viewing it) the only real ground of justification and acceptance before God. Hence do we obtain a corroborative testimony to the validity of the reasoning we have pursued, respecting the omission of a future state as a sanction to the Mosaic law. And we discover, at the same time, a remarkable instance of the harmony which pervades the Divine dispensations in the economy of the old and new covenants.

The truth of these observations will appear, we trust, from a candid examination of this interesting subject in regard to the three following points : First, the origin of sacrifice : Secondly, its meaning : Third-

ly, its use and importance, considered as a subordinate and temporary provision belonging to the general plan of revealed religion.

The nature of this examination renders it necessary to offer in this place a few introductory remarks, for the purpose of explaining its object and defining its extent.

To pursue the doctrine of sacrifice through its many and extensive ramifications would greatly exceed the limits of our design : that design embracing only so much of the subject as, being closely interwoven with the plan of our redemption, is therefore essentially connected with the general purpose of this treatise.

As the subject of our immediate attention is denoted by a word of loose and various acceptation, it will be proper that we should, in the first place, determine the sense in which we intend to employ it. The following limitation must therefore be attended to.

Though the term *sacrifice*, according to various received definitions, has a more extended application, it will in the sequel be restricted to that species of offering, which is distinguished by the infliction of death on a living victim, and which is more specifically denoted by the term *mactation*. It must not, however, be so understood, as necessarily to exclude, on the other hand, all those additional cases, wherein, according to the Levitical ritual, the infliction of death is prescribed as the part of a religious service, though such cases may lie beyond the boundaries of the received definitions. We find it ne-

cessary thus to narrow the compass of its signification in one way, because, according to some definitions, it comprises inanimate in common with animal offerings^a: and to enlarge it in another, because it is at one time so defined, as to exclude whatever offerings, though of the animal class, were not either wholly or in part consumed upon the altar; and at another, with more particular reference to the ritual of Moses, the definition separates from the sacrificial character whatever victims were not presented in the tabernacle or temple, according to the mode which that ritual prescribes^b.

With regard to sacrifice thus defined, a further limitation is requisite. Our attention in treating

^a Of these definitions the following may serve for examples. "Sacrificium est *victima, et quæcunque cremantur in ara.*" Lact. Div. Inst. vi. 25. "Quæ Deo ante aram, vel in mensa sacra in adyto exteriori posita, ita quidem offerebantur, ut rite consumenda essent, ea Judæi in sacrificiorum censum referunt. Quæ cum ita sint, sacrificium, ad eorum sententiam, ita definiri potest, ut sit ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ RITE CONSUMPTA. ——— Sacra autem rite consumpta erant, quæ ritu divinitus instituto interempta, cremata, aut effusa, aut ad epulas sacras adhibita erant. ——— Eorum autem, quæ et oblata, et ritu sacro consumpta erant, ——— *alia erant ex inanimis, alia autem ex animantibus.*" Outram de Sacrificiis, lib. i. c. viii. §. 2, 3.

^b According to these definitions, the first observance of the Passover would be excluded from the sacrificial character: which however, we contend, most strictly belonged to it. See Lev. xiv. 5. Numb. xix. 1—10. Deut. xxi. 1—9. In regard to the ceremonies described in the passages here referred to, we feel it unnecessary to decide, whether the precise notion of sacrifice for which we shall in the sequel contend does, or does not, attach to them: it is sufficient that they are not, by any terms we have employed, excluded from that designation. Our motive in saying this, is to wave a discussion which is not necessary to our purpose.

this subject will be confined to those essential qualities which belong to it in its strict character of an oblation : for this is all that we are at present concerned with. Whatever concomitant and circumstantial particulars may be found subsisting in connexion with these qualities, will therefore be passed over : though such particulars may be found to rest upon the authority of a Divine injunction.

In order to clear the subject, and to explain the principles of our proceeding, we are to observe, that the general system of religious oblations in the Old Testament cannot otherwise be justly regarded, than as having been framed with a view to more than one object. Many purposes, additional and subordinate to those for which we shall more especially contend, were contemplated in it. That they were, may reasonably be explained by regarding the state of the world to which that system was accommodated. The mode of instruction by symbolical rites is at all times useful ; but it was more particularly suitable to the circumstances of those times, which we find distinguished by the more abundant employment of it. We say that this mode of instruction is at all times useful : because those instituted ordinances which instruct by actions instead of words, are calculated to guard both the permanence and the purity of important truths from the uncertainties of tradition, the fluctuations and ambiguities of language. Their utility is further discovered in the superior strength of those vivid impressions which are thus attached to the lessons they inculcate :

“ *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures*

“ *Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*

We need not therefore wonder, if it shall appear, that the Divine wisdom has partly employed this mode of instruction for the edification of mankind in all ages. We find it even now continued in the two sacraments of the Christian church. But it was more particularly called for in the early stages of revelation. The wisdom of the Divine economy in adapting its provisions to the wants and circumstances of the human race, permitted in these periods only a scanty and sparing disclosure of evangelical truth : and the veil of emblem and similitude was therefore well adapted to a state of things, in which a limited information was necessary and proper, but a full disclosure would have been unseasonable. Agreeably to this view, we find that the method of instruction by parable and similitude (it differs not, as to this point, whether by word or action) was largely employed, even after the light of the Gospel had begun to dawn upon the world in the preaching of our Lord : we find a reason assigned for it which is strictly in unison with the tenor of these remarks : and we also find an announcement of the near approach of that time, when, under the fuller dispensation of religious knowledge, it would be less employed. “ I have yet many things to say unto you, *but ye cannot bear them now*^c. ” “ These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs : but *the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father*^d. ”

It appears then, that figurative instruction, con-

^c John xvi. 12.

^d Ibid. verse 25.

veyed through the medium of ceremonial ordinances, was proper, partly for a reason arising from the general constitution of man; and partly for reasons which more especially attach to an imperfect communication of religious truth. In congruity with the principles thus laid down, we may reasonably suppose, that a variety of uses and instructions were contemplated in the numerous oblations required by the Law, and that every particularity of detail belonging to them had a distinct and beneficial purpose. We may discover, in one part of the scheme, an instituted act of homage, together with an expressive declaration of gratitude and dependence; in another, we may properly acknowledge the solemnities of a covenant; in a third, we may recognise the appointed tokens of friendship and peace between God and his worshippers: these things, I say, may be acknowledged as the separate designs of distinct ordinances, or of subordinate regulations belonging to the same ordinances. But this will in no degree militate against the construction we attach to that part of the system, in which man is set forth to us as a sinner and a penitent, and his Maker as a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. This part, which will be the exclusive subject of our present consideration, is limited to the simple act of worshipping the Deity by the immolation of a victim.

We have been led into our present remarks, chiefly by a desire of obviating those objections against the construction of one part of the oblatinal system, which are made by alleging the interpretation of a different part. And this we esteem the more ne-

cessary, by reason of the mistakes and misrepresentations which present themselves to our notice in the writings of various theologians who have treated this subject before us ; and of whom, though we question not their learning and ability, we cannot hesitate to declare our opinion, that they have widely deviated from the truth, under the influence of contracted views and systematic prejudice. Thus, one divine^e can discover in the sacrificial ordinance, at least during a long period of its prevalence, nothing more than the notion of a gift, or voluntary offering ; and another^f maintains, that it has no other import than that of a federal rite. With some restriction as to the latitude of the former of these interpretations^g, we may admit the correctness of both^h in their application to distinct parts and purposes of the oblation ritual : while the contemplation of either of them, as the proper interpretation of the whole of that ritual, involves, as we conceive, the same ab-

^e Spencer. “ Monendum est itaque, sacrificia *munera tantum* fuisse, quæ prisca simplicitas in Deum contulit, et ad fines eosdem apud Deum, quos munera apud homines, valere credidit.” De Legg. p. 762.

^f Sykes. “ Sacrifices were federal rites, and implied men’s entering into friendship with God ; or if they had violated friendship with God by violating the stipulation entered into, then sacrifice implied a renewal of friendship, or a reconciliation with him, or a return to that state from which the offender had departed.” Essay on Sacrifices, p. 59.

^g That is to say, the free-will offering is to be regarded as voluntary, inasmuch as each distinct observance of it was so : but this does not imply, that either its *first institution*, or the *mode* of its observance, was voluntary on the part of man.

^h With regard to the former, see Levit. xxii. 18. ; the latter applies, Exod. xxiv. 8. and Psalm l. 5.

surdity, as that of giving the delineation of a single feature for the portrait of a countenance.

In tracing the origin of sacrifice, the chief stress of argument ought doubtless to be laid on the testimony of scripture. On this therefore we shall principally rely, as the most decisive, if not the only competent, authority. In addition however to the light we thus obtain, there are other considerations to which a minor importance may properly be attached: because, though they were deemed inconclusive of themselves, and though we put them not in competition with the guidance of sacred truth, they are adapted to display, in strong colours of general probability and reason, the doctrine, which we would chiefly insist on as the result of more authoritative evidence.

One of these considerations, derived from a clear and forcible writer, may here be offered, as a suitable preliminary to a scriptural investigation. "What-ever practice," observes Delany, "has obtained universally in the world, must have obtained from some dictate of reason, or some demand of nature, or some principle of interest; or else from some powerful influence or injunction of some being of universal authority. Now the practice of animal sacrifice did not obtain from reason; for no reasonable notions of God could teach men, that he could take delight in blood, or in the fat of slain beasts; nor will any man say, that we have any natural instinct to gratify, in spilling the blood of an innocent creature; nor could there be any temptation from appetite to do this in those ages,

“ when the whole sacrifice was consumed by fire ;
“ or when, if it was not, yet men wholly abstained
“ from flesh ; and consequently this practice did not
“ owe its origin to any principle of interest. Nay,
“ so far from any thing of this, that the destruction
“ of innocent and useful creatures is evidently against
“ nature, against reason, and against interest ; and
“ therefore must be founded in an authority, whose
“ influence was as powerful as the practice was uni-
“ versal ; and that could be none but the autho-
“ rity of God the sovereign of the world, or of Adam
“ the founder of the human race. If it be said, of
“ Adam ; the question still returns—What motive
“ determined him to the practice ? It could not be
“ nature, reason, or interest, as has been shewn ;
“ and therefore it must have been the authority of
“ his Sovereign. And had Adam enjoined it to his
“ posterity, it is not to be imagined that they would
“ have obeyed him, in so extraordinary and expen-
“ sive a rite, from any other motive than the com-
“ mand of Godⁱ.”

The argument thus stated yields a strong presumption in favour of the position we desire to maintain. This position we shall now endeavour to establish on the certain basis of scriptural evidence.

The knowledge we possess relating to the first observance of sacrifice, is principally derived from the two following passages of the sacred volume. The first is from the Book of Genesis. “ And in

ⁱ Revelation examined with Candour ; vol. i. Diss. viii. The passage referred to being too long for citation, I have given the substance of it in a compressed form from Kennicott's Two Dissertations.

“ process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought
 “ of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the
 “ Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings
 “ of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord
 “ had respect unto Abel and to his offering : but
 “ unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect ^k.”
 The second is from the Epistle to the Hebrews.
 “ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent
 “ sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness
 “ that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts ^l.”

In the foregoing texts, there are two points which chiefly claim our regard : the act of Abel, and the principle from which it sprung. The act is, that *he brought of the firstlings of his flock an offering unto the Lord*, and that *he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*. The principle which led to that act is *faith*. Now *faith*, when spoken of as a religious principle, must have a necessary reference to a Divine command. Hence we would infer, that there existed a connexion between the sacrifice of Abel and the command of God. “ If
 “ faith,” says Dr. Kennicott, “ was the principle, that
 “ influenced Abel to bring the animal sacrifice, he
 “ certainly did not bring it from the dictates of reason only. For we have the express testimony of
 “ the apostle, that ‘ faith cometh by hearing, and
 “ hearing by the word of God ^m ;’ the consequence
 “ of which is, that Abel offered this sacrifice in obedience to *the word of God*, which evidently means
 “ the word of God revealed ⁿ.”

^k Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5. ^l Hebrews xi. 4.

^m “ Rom. x. 17.”

ⁿ Two Dissertations, p. 212. ed. 1747.

But this conclusion is resisted. It is alleged, that the reason why one offering was accepted and the other rejected, is to be found, not in the outward act and mode of worship, but in the dispositions of the worshippers; that the faith and piety of the one, and the absence of these qualities in the other, were the causes of the different receptions which their oblations experienced; and that the faith of Abel had regard only to the general promises of God. This supposition being admitted, it is further contended, that there is no more necessity for referring to a Divine command the sacrifice of Abel than that of Cain °.

But if no importance be allowed to attach to the difference of the two offerings, it is surely unaccountable that this difference should be so distinctly noticed by the sacred historian. Consider the very concise brevity with which Moses hath compressed within the space of six chapters, whatever was important to be known by after-ages respecting the transactions of the antediluvian world, extending through a period of sixteen hundred years. Are we, in a narrative thus framed, to look for a distinct specification of unimportant circumstances? Would it not be more reasonable to expect, in a record of such comprehensive brevity, the insertion of

° “ Fides illa quæ Abelis donum πλειονος θυσιας titulo dignum fecit, persuasio fuit tam firma et alte fixa de propenso Dei in “ pios omnes affectu, et præmiis amplissimis in pie viventes “ conferendis, quod vitam ejus ad pietatis regulas instituerit, et “ non tantum bona sua sed et seipsum Deo dederit.” Spencer de Legg. p. 768.

no particulars, but such as are designed to be the subject of marked attention and the vehicle of important instruction ?

Let us again advert to the view of this transaction which is afforded by the apostle to the Hebrews. By this writer, the *outward act* and the *inward disposition* are plainly distinguished. The former is designated by *faith* ; the latter by a *more excellent sacrifice* ; *πλειονα θυσιων*, a more abundant sacrifice, or that which has more of the real nature of sacrifice. The matter itself of the sacrifice is also stated explicitly, as partly constituting the ground of its acceptance : for it is said, that God testified of his *gifts*. If we thus combine together the views afforded by Moses and St. Paul, it will not be easy to evade the following conclusion : namely, that faith and obedience were both exercised in the specific act and mode of worship performed by Abel, and that both were wanting in the performance of Cain.

Those however who maintain the human institution of sacrifice, will argue thus : “ It is certain that “ Cain and Abel presented such offerings as were “ respectively most suitable to their several means “ and occupations. Cain, being an husbandman, is “ said to have offered from the fruits of the ground, “ and Abel, being a shepherd, to have offered from “ the firstlings of his flock, an offering to the Lord. “ Here we have a probable ground of conjecture, “ *that they offered their sacrifices, only as the voluntary expressions of gratitude to God, for the “ blessings with which he had prospered their several labours* ; and that reason dictated no less

“ the act of sacrifice, than the matter of the sacrifice. For Cain and Abel appear, from the instruction of their natural reason, to have judged, that in making a sacred offering of gratitude to God, that which they had first received from him should be preferred as the matter of the oblation : in order that their sacrifice might thus become a more expressive declaration of the Divine goodness and of their own thankfulness^p.”

Such is the reasoning of Spencer, one of the most learned and strenuous maintainers of the human original of sacrifice. But if I am capable of rightly estimating the value of his argument, the facts on which it professes to be grounded are such as dictate an inference, precisely the contrary to that which he has deduced from them.

That Cain, filled as he was with pride and wickedness, and destitute of faith, humility, and holiness, should have been actuated by the principle thus ascribed to him, is a probable supposition. It may be allowed, that he contemplated his own proceeding as perfectly agreeable to reason, and indeed far more so than that of his brother. For uninstructed reason could never discover, in the slaughter of a victim, a fit mode of worshipping God, or of obtaining the great ends of a religious service : and as to revelation, the want of faith which is imputed to him would naturally induce a resistance of that authority. Pride may have felt a degradation in the selection, as an offering to the Majesty of heaven, of that which had more affinity to his brother's habits

^p Spencer de Legg. p. 767. The foregoing citation is translated from that work.

of life than his own : and the selection, thus made by the supreme authority of God, may have induced, in a mind festering with vanity, a stinging, though groundless, sense of personal inferiority.

But if we look to the final issue of this transaction, we surely cannot discover the slightest ground for supposing, that the principle thus described was agreeable to the Divine will : nor the slightest countenance of that opinion, which refers the introduction of sacrifice to the dictates of reason, the sentiments of nature, and the suggestion of circumstance.

Indeed, I cannot but think, that the sacred record was designedly framed, in regard to those few particulars which are here presented to our notice, with a view to cut off all pretence for the inference which has been drawn from it by this writer, and by others who have followed him in the same line of argument. Had Moses simply recorded the different acts of worship performed by Cain and Abel ; had he omitted the mention of any following events subsisting in connexion with those acts : here would have been a fair show of probable evidence in support of their reasoning, who maintain the human institution of sacrifice. But this is not the character of the statement before us. From this statement it appears, indeed, that both Cain and Abel presented an oblation to God ; and that these oblations had respectively an equal affinity to their several occupations in life. Thus far then, we admit, a case is before us, which may countenance, though faintly, an opinion, that sacrifice was the progeny of human reason, and that the earliest oblations were suggested

by the employments and situations of the worshippers. Faintly, I say, by reason of the preponderating weight of scriptural evidence which militates against it. This however, to make the most of it, is reasoning upon a half of our subject, while we profess to reason upon the whole. If we will only view the entire transaction, we shall quickly see it in a different shape and complexion. For when we find that, in the event, one of these offerings was accepted, and the other rejected; does not this imply a declaration, that those rational considerations, which are supposed to have dictated the first sacrificial observance, were contrary to the will and approbation of God? As to the natural fitness of the acts with relation to the circumstances of the agents, both offerings stand on the same footing of propriety: Abel's offering was an act of devotion suitable to the character of a shepherd, and that of Cain was equally so to the character of an husbandman. So far, both had an equally fair prospect of acceptance and favour; and yet the result was far different from any expectation which might thus have been framed.

On the whole, then, if we would frame a just conclusion with regard to this transaction, we must take a full and impartial view of it: we must have a regard to the different result of the two offerings: we must attentively remark those additional particulars which have been communicated to us, and which may afford a clue to the explanation of that difference: and most especially, we must not, after the example of this learned writer, confine our attention to those circumstances in the two cases

which are apparently similar or analogous, while we exclude others which are marked by the most striking disagreement. These additional particulars are as follows. First, the accepted offering consisted in the shedding of blood, without which we are instructed, that there "is no remission¹;" whereas that which was rejected was an offering of inanimate things. Secondly, the accepted offering was offered by faith: the rejected offering, without faith. Thirdly, it is said that God testified of Abel's *gifts*: the gifts being a subject of approbation plainly distinguishable from *the disposition of the offerer*.

So little countenance indeed does the scriptural account of this transaction afford to those who maintain that sacrifice originated in human reason, that we might, in the case of Cain, contend with greater justice and probability, that human reason had unwarrantably and presumptuously interfered to alter the mode of worship prescribed by God. With regard also to Abel, it would be more consistent with the discoveries of revelation to suppose, that his pastoral occupation had been taken up, as the consequence of a Divine institution to which it was subservient, than that the mode of worship he performed was suggested by the employment which he followed.

In the language of those theologians against whom we contend, we find the greatest stress laid upon the dictates of natural reason, the circumstances and habits of life of the earliest sacrificers. Whether such causes are in themselves adequate to the pro-

¹ Heb. ix. 22.

duction of the effect ascribed to them, is a consideration not only important, but necessary, towards a just determination of the question at issue. It will therefore be deserving of brief inquiry, whether reason, guided by nature only, and prompted by circumstance, would have been likely to impel the human conduct in that direction which these divines maintain that it would have taken.

Let us then contemplate the human mind, left to its free operations, uncontrolled by any command of God, and wholly unassisted by Divine instruction. To a mind thus circumstanced, what fitness or propriety could possibly discover itself in the practice of sacrifice? What imaginable ground could occur for a belief, that the death of a victim possessed any inherent virtue towards pacifying the Divine anger, or conciliating the Divine favour? In the slaughter of inoffensive brutes; in the destruction by fire of such things, as might otherwise have been subservient to the wants and necessities of human life; what is there here that could, in its intrinsic character, ever be viewed by reason under the light of nature only, as a fit means of testifying our subjection to God, or of obtaining pardon for sin^r? Could that which is loathsome and disgusting to the natural feelings of man, have been thought of as a probable gratification to the purity of God? An ancient poet has the following strong and pointed reflection on this subject:

^r Wilkins on the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion, b. i. c. 12. p. 182. ed. 1675.

Τις ᾤδε μωρος και λιαν ανειμενος,
 Ευπιστος ανδρων, οστις ελπίζει θεους,
 Οστων ασαρκων και χολης πυρουμενης,
 'Α και κυσιν πεινωσιν ουχι βρωσιμα,
 Χαιρειν ᾗπαντας, και γερας λαχειν τοδε^s.

Reason, if it discard the aid of scripture, must be baffled in every attempt to explain, or to discover, the slightest connexion between the means and the end. It must then be perfectly incredible that this faculty should, without assistance or direction, have conducted mankind to the observance of such a practice.

Such is the difficulty of accounting, on any grounds purely rational, for the introduction of a bloody rite into the ceremonial of religious worship. But of this difficulty we have not yet seen the whole: it will be greatly enhanced, if we advert to the situation of those among whom sacrifice is known to have first prevailed.

This indeed is necessary in order to a just determination of the question. If we would form a correct judgment of the course of action which men, under any particular circumstances, would be likely to pursue, we must dismiss the prejudices arising from the customs of our own age, and from a previous knowledge of those which have existed in the world. Regard must be had to *their* habits and conditions, and to the feelings which would naturally be associated with *their* situation. Thus, with regard to the earliest sacrificers: their sentiments are not to be

^s Incert. Poet. apud Porph. de Abst. lib. ii.

estimated by the ordinary feelings of men, inured to the destruction of life as the means of providing sustenance. The antediluvian inhabitants of the world, in the transactions of whom we meet with the earliest record of sacrifice, derived their subsistence from the fruits and vegetable productions of the earth, without the wilful infliction of death or suffering on any living creature. In such a race of men, it is reasonable to believe, that an abhorrence of bloodshed would have been a deeply rooted and predominating sentiment. In what light then, had they obeyed no impulse but that of nature, would they have viewed the perpetration of bloodshed in the services of religion? The force and character of the feelings which would have been generated by such habits of life, may be very correctly estimated from the following beautiful lines :

- “ Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus, inque tuendos
- “ Natum homines, pleno quæ fertis in ubere nectar ?
- “ Mollia quæ nobis vestras velamina lanas
- “ Præbetis ; vitæque magis quam morte juvatis.
- “ Quid meruere boves, animal sine fraude dolisque
- “ Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores ?
- “ Immemor est demum, nec frugum munere dignus,
- “ Qui potuit, curvi demto modo pondere aratri,
- “ Ruricolam mactare suum : qui trita labore
- “ Illa, quibus toties durum renovaverat arvom,
- “ Tot dederat messes, percussit colla securi.
- “ Nec satis est quod tale nefas committitur : ipsos
- “ Inscriptere Deos scelere ; numenque supernum
- “ Cæde laboriferi credunt gaudere juveni.
- “ Victima labe carens et præstantissima forma
- “ (Nam placuisse nocet) vittis præsignis et auro,
- “ Sistitur ante aras : auditque ignara precantem :
- “ Imponique suæ videt inter cornua fronti

“ Quas coluit fruges ; percussaque sanguine cultros
“ Inficit in liquida prævisos forsitan unda^t.”

So little ground is there for supposing, that sacrifice could have resulted from any process of reasoning to which the circumstances and situation of the first worshippers may have given rise ! Far from possessing in itself any thing congenial to the natural sentiments of the human mind, it is infinitely more probable that it would, in the infancy of our species, if it had not been propounded by supreme authority, have been encountered by the strongest feelings of repugnance and disgust. The existence of a sanguinary rite of worship in union with those habits and feelings to which we refer, may therefore with more justice be contemplated, as the triumph of faith over the suggestions of nature, than as an act of obedience to her dictates.

But “ the rude simplicity of primeval life ” is much insisted on by Spencer, as a consideration which tends to soften the difficulties connected with a belief in the human institution of Sacrifice. The fallacy of his argument is of that kind which frequently results from the employment of loose and indeterminate language. If, by a rude simplicity of character, we are to understand, an ignorance of those polished arts and refinements which grow up with the progress of civilization ; this indeed may truly be ascribed to these primitive worshippers. And this, we might justly suppose, was the only signification which the terms were intended to express : since we find that signification illustrated by alleging

^t Ov. Met. xv. 116.

their ignorance of literature, and the nature of their garments, which consisted of the skins of beasts. But what is this to the purpose? If on the other hand a more extended meaning be affixed to the terms; if they be understood to express that grossness of conception respecting the Divine attributes, which Spencer ascribes to these early sacrificers; then the inference must be resisted by a denial of the point which is thus unwarrantably assumed. For, can it be imagined, that the knowledge which Adam, in his state of original righteousness, possessed respecting the perfections of his Maker; can it be imagined that this knowledge was entirely obliterated from his mind after the fall? Such a supposition is totally destitute of all countenance either from scripture or reason, and seems incompatible with the notion of our first parent's personal identity in his twofold condition of an innocent and a fallen being. Then, if Adam retained this knowledge after his fall, can we believe that he would neglect the instruction of his immediate offspring on a subject of such vital importance? Or, if he did not neglect it, that the knowledge thus imparted should have been so grossly disfigured in its transmission from father to son, and that during the lifetime of the parent? One of these suppositions, however harsh and unreasonable, must plainly be admitted, or the ground of argument can never be tenable.

The former restricted sense of the words is plainly all that can be maintained; and yet it is undeniable, that the more extended signification is that which has furnished the basis of the reasoning. This will

appear from a citation of the author's words. "Why," says he, "should the primeval race of men endeavour by the oblation of gifts to conciliate the Divine grace and favour? Why, but because they estimated God by the disposition of man, and thought that gifts would have no less influence with him than with their fellow-creatures^u." Another passage from the same author will supply a fuller developement of the ideas expressed in the former citation. "According to the rude conceptions of primitive times, God was estimated as a being who would dispense all his bounties by the inducement of gifts; as if, like men, he could be influenced by presents, or feel himself obliged by any liberality which was shewn him, to make an equal return. Thus it was that the ancients carried on a kind of traffic with their Maker, and conducted themselves towards him as an usurer, who gave, only in order that he might receive^x."

Against that profane irreverence of sentiment which is here expressed in regard to the best and holiest of beings, piety may well exclaim. If such reasoning be justly entitled to any thing further than a strong expression of abhorrence and disgust,

^u "Quid enim homines primævi muneribus oblatis gratiam et favorem divinum sibi conciliare studerent, nisi quod Deum ex ingenio humano æstimantes, munera non minus apud eum quam homines valere judicarent?" *De Legg.* p. 772.

^x "Ævi prisci ruditas opinata est, Deum omnia muneribus concessurum; quasi more humano, donis permulceri posset, aut largitione quavis, ut paria cum iis faceret, obstringeretur. Adeo ut nundinationem quandam cum Deo exercerent veteres, et ita cum illo agerent, quasi fœnerator esset, daretque tantum ut acciperet." *Ibid.* p. 764.

the confutation of it may be readily supplied. That God had respect to Abel's offering, is a plain proof that such offering was not presented under the influence of those considerations to which it is thus ascribed: for these very considerations are, in the sacred word, and in relation to the subject of sacrifice, unequivocally condemned as most offensive to the Divine purity. In order to evince the truth of this assertion, we will adduce a quotation from the fiftieth Psalm. Here the displeasure of God against sacrifice is strongly declared. For what reason, can we imagine, is this done? God often declares himself, in other parts of his revealed word, pleased with such observances. The text itself will supply the explanation we want. "Hear, O my people, "and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify "against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will "not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt "offerings, to have been continually before me. I "will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats "out of thy folds. *For every beast of the forest is "mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I "know all the fowls of the mountains: and the "wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were "hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is "mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the "flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*" Sacrifice, which at other times is spoken of as an acceptable service, is here described as an abomination: and that, only by reason of its connexion with the very sentiments, by which, according to Spen-

cer, the sacrifice of Abel was suggested. For the offensive quality of such oblations is plainly declared to consist, first, in the notion of presenting a gift to the owner; and secondly, in the profane absurdity of supposing, that the taste and smell of slaughtered victims could in themselves be pleasing to a holy and spiritual being^z.

Part of the above cited passage may appear, perhaps, rather at variance with our general views. "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds." But these words can on no account be understood to convey an unqualified and unconditional condemnation of sacrifice, considered in the abstract: for this construction of them would be followed by consequences, which even those against whom we contend would be unwilling to admit, or at least unable to maintain. On this view, the words can be understood to signify nothing less than an abrogation of the sacrificial ordinance: a supposition which, in regard to the date of this Psalm, is notoriously remote from the fact, and contrary to the declared purposes of the Divine will. This interpretation being therefore plainly inadmissible, the true import of the sentence may be stated with greater probability, if we suppose it to express a declaration, that God would accept no sacrifices offered under the influence of those profane and gross conceptions, which, in the following verses, are marked with such strong reprobation. Or, they may be regarded as pointing to the fulness of future time, when sacrifice was to be done away, after the

^z Horne on the Psalms.

consummation of its mysterious import by the priesthood of the Messiah. Or, thirdly, they may be intended to signify an instruction, that nothing further was exacted in the way of ritual observance beyond the actual performances of the people who are thus addressed ; together with an intimation, that it was the spiritual, and not the ceremonial, part of a religious service, in the omission of which their deficiency consisted ^a. This last exposition appears indeed the most probable, by reason of the countenance it derives from the following verses, in which the defects of their worship are specifically denoted. “ *Offer unto God thanksgiving ; and pay thy vows unto the most High : and call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*”

When the furious and malignant passions of Cain were roused by the rejection of his unhallowed service, we find that God condescended to expostulate with him on the indulgence of such unreasonable feelings. The words in which this remonstrance is expressed are very remarkable : they claim our most especial attention, because they cannot, on principles of sound interpretation, be easily reconciled to any supposition, which excludes from sacrifice the characters of both a divine appointment and an expiatory design. Such is the concurrent opinion of some

^a The general design of the passage appears correctly stated in the following interpretation of the 8th verse : Q. d. “ Quantum ad externa sacrificia, satis estis occupati : verum interna et præcipua (de quibus ver. 14.) negligitis. Sacrificia in V. T. improbantur tantum secundum quid, ratione scil. deficientis fidei, pœnitentiæ,” &c. Poli Synopsis in Psal. I. ver. 8.

of the most learned and able expositors of the original text. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door^b." Of the expositors to whom I refer, it is the decided judgment, that the word which is here rendered *sin*, ought properly to have been translated by the term *sin-offering*, agreeably to the actual version of it in other parts of scripture. I will subjoin the words with the adoption of the proposed alteration: to which I will annex the paraphrase and remark of a distinguished critic. " '*Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted, and if thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth even at thy door.*' As if he had said—Why art thou so angry at the preference shewn to thy brother, as if it were an instance of partiality in me; whereas it is only the effect of laws which I had before declared: for knowest thou not, that if thou dischargest thy duty fully, thou shalt be accepted; and that if thou failest therein, I have appointed an atonement for sin, by the sacrifice of an animal that is entirely in thy power, near at hand, and that *coucheth* or lieth down even before thy door?—Here then we have God himself enforcing the observation of animal sacrifice; and commanding it, as the known remedy then provided for the lapses of mankind^c." It would be improper to dismiss the subject without observing, that the proposed substitution of the term *sin-offering* for *sin*, appears to convey the only admissible interpre-

^b Gen. iv. 7.

^c Kennicott's Two Dissertations, p. 217.

tation of the original: since an idiomatical peculiarity has been noticed in the expression thus translated, by virtue of which that signification of it, and no other, can be consistent with grammatical propriety^d.

There is one remaining consideration, to which I conceive that an undue importance is not annexed, if we say, that it ought in candour to be regarded as decisive of the controversy. The grant of animal food to man was not till after the flood. Antecedently to that period, we read of no permission to take away the life of brutes. Whence then did Abel derive his authority for the destruction of animal life? That he was authorized, there can be no doubt: for if he had not been, his bloody offering could not have obtained the acceptance and approbation of God.

A celebrated writer on moral philosophy has the following observation. “ It seems to me, that it
“ would be difficult to defend the right of killing
“ animals for food by any arguments which the light
“ and order of nature afford; and that we are be-
“ holden for it to the permission recorded in Scrip-
“ ture. ‘ And God blessed Noah and his sons, and
“ said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and re-
“ plenish the earth. And the fear of you and the
“ dread of you shall be upon every beast of the
“ earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon
“ all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the
“ fishes of the sea; into your hand are they de-
“ livered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be

^d See Magee on Atonement, vol. ii. p. 244.

“ meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given
“ you all things^e. ”

This is the remark of a clear and comprehensive mind, eminently distinguished by a talent, not only of reasoning skilfully, but also of poising the weight of evidence, and of nicely adjusting the balance of conflicting arguments. The foregoing citation from his writings cannot therefore but appear an important concession, respecting the impossibility of establishing, by any unassisted process of the mind, the right of slaying animals for food. On what rational ground then can we establish the right of slaying them for sacrifice ? Cases may perhaps be supposed, such, for instance, as those of necessity and self-protection, in which for particular reasons the destruction of life might be justified before the permission of animal food was granted. These may be alleged as exceptions to the general law : but in the number of these exceptions sacrifice cannot, on any principle which fairly applies to it, be included. On the whole therefore we contend, that the acceptable celebration of a sanguinary worship, cannot be accounted for consistently with the state of mankind in the antediluvian world, otherwise than by the admission of its Divine appointment^f.

^e Gen. ix. 1, 2, 3. Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, book ii. chap. 11.

^f “ We know that no being has a right to the lives of the
“ creatures but their Creator, or those on whom he confers that
“ right : and it is certain that God had not yet given man a right
“ to the creatures, even for necessary food ; and much less for
“ unnecessary cruelty. And therefore, nothing but his command
“ could create a right to take away their lives. It is also evident,
“ that killing an innocent creature cannot, in its own nature, be

Among those who maintain the human original of sacrifice, it cannot be denied that there exists a considerable diversity of sentiment, in regard to the principles which are supposed to have dictated or suggested its introduction. Of the theories which have thus been framed, our attention has hitherto been confined to one. It will not, however, be necessary to the purpose of a candid investigation, that the others should be examined with equal care: because the arguments by which we have encountered the former will, if assented to, be found decidedly conclusive against the latter. Thus, it is contended by Warburton, that “the common sentiments of our nature would draw the first men into “this mode of worship;” which is itself described by that great writer as an example of the “ancient “mode of converse by action in aid of words.” “Some chosen animal,” says he, “precious to the “repenting criminal, who deprecates, or supposed “to be obnoxious to the Deity, who is to be appeased, was offered up and slain at the altar, in “an action, which, in all languages, when translated into words, speaks to this purpose,—‘ I confess my transgressions at thy footstool, O my God! “and, with the deepest contrition, implore thy pardon; confessing that I deserve death for these my “offences.’—The latter part of the confession was

“properly said to be doing *well*. And therefore, since Abel is “acknowledged by God to have *done well*, in killing the firstlings “of his flock in sacrifice, it is evident he must have done this for “some very good and just reason; and what reason could justify “him in doing it, but the command of God?” Revelation examined with Candour, vol. i. p. 132.

“ more forcibly expressed by the *action* of striking
“ the devoted animal, and depriving it of life ; which,
“ when put into words, concluded in this man-
“ ner’—‘ And I own that I myself deserve the death
“ which I now inflict on this animal^g.’” But if the
action itself should, under the circumstances con-
nected with its first performance, appear (agreeably
to the tenor of our former observations) calculated
to provoke the strongest antipathies of nature, and
to involve in it the cruel usurpation of a right which
God had never conferred ; if this view be correct, it
will necessarily follow, that such an action could
never have occurred to the mind as a proper mode
of pious and reverential intercourse with the Deity.
Equally inadmissible, for the purpose of explaining
a sacrifice which was observed many ages before the
lawful use of animal food, will be the theory of an-
other writer, who proposes to account for the human
original of sacrifices by supposing, “ that eating and
“ drinking together were the known ordinary sym-
“ bols of friendship, and were the usual rites of en-
“ gaging in covenants and leagues, and of renewing
“ and ratifying friendships^h.” From a detailed ex-
amination of these several systems we feel ourselves
exonerated, not only by a regard to the proper bre-
vity of a subordinate inquiry, but by a respect for
the proper object of all inquiry whatever, which is,
the evidence of truth, and not the gratification of a
controversial taste. For, as the evidence of truth in
itself supplies the confutation of error, it therefore
dispenses with a separate exposure of its fallacies :

^g Div. Leg. b. ix. c. 2. vol. vi. pp. 275, 276.

^h Sykes's Essay on Sacrifices, p. 73.

and the traveller, who is satisfied that he is right in the path which he has chosen, can have no occasion to waste his time in the useless labour of exploring deviations.

SECTION II.

Meaning of Sacrifice.

Ἡ ΝΕΑ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ ΠΑΛΑΙΩ, ΚΕΧΑΡΑΓΜΕΝΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙ.

Clem. Alex. Pædag. i. 7.

THE foregoing inquiry respecting the origin of sacrifice will be properly followed by an examination of its meaning.

In pursuing this branch of the subject, it will, in the first place, be proper to state the view of it which we feel ourselves called upon to maintain. We contend then that Sacrifice, from the earliest date of its observance, and according to the purpose of its first institution, was distinguished by the following essential characters and properties. It was a means of symbolical instruction appointed in order to the expiation of sin; the instruction being conveyed by transferring, in representation, the imputation of sin from the guilty to the innocent, and by substituting, in representation also, the innocent in the place of the guilty, as the subject of punishment. In other words, it was both expiatory in its design, and vicarious in its import.

Towards establishing the justice of this view, clearness of method will best be consulted, if we first ascertain the character of sacrifice, considered exclusively as a provision of the Mosaic law. Having done this, we shall have gained a step of consider-

able importance towards facilitating our further progress.

I. With regard then to the import of sacrifice, viewed as a specific ordinance of the Mosaic institution: here the difficulty of proof consists in the selection, rather than in the discovery, of arguments. From a variety of passages contained in the Pentateuch, which afford a concurrent representation of this subject, I will first select a portion from the directions which are given respecting the first observance of the passover: which is not indeed adduced as being so decisive of the point at issue as some others, but because the language employed is peculiarly striking, and appears to be hardly reconcilable with any principles at variance with those which are here maintained.

“ And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and *when I see the blood, I will pass over you*, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.—For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and *when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you*ⁱ.”

Let me here be allowed to quote the words of a venerable father of the primitive church. In the way of proof, indeed, no stress is laid upon them; but they are illustrative of the subject, and contain a reflection highly just and applicable to it. “ As

ⁱ Exod. xii. 13. 23.

“ the blood of the passover,” says Justin Martyr, “ saved those in Egypt, thus also the blood of Christ will rescue from death those who believe. Would God then have been liable to mistake in regard to those who were to be spared, if this signal had not been placed upon their doors ? Certainly not : but it was done, because he proclaimed beforehand that salvation which should be wrought for mankind through the blood of Christ^k.”

We will however, in the next place, turn our attention to another sacrificial ordinance, by a regard to which, combined with some other texts which are explanatory of it, we shall be better able to come to a satisfactory and decisive conclusion as to the character of the Levitical sacrifice in general, and shall be able also to fix the application of the particular passage already cited to the subject, to which it is conceived to relate. This ordinance is that of the burnt offering : the mode of solemnizing which is prescribed at the beginning of the Book of Leviticus, and is, with regard to those essential points on which we chiefly insist, the same with the ritual prescribed on a variety of other occasions.

“ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish : he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And

^k Dial. cum Tryph. c. 111.

“ he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering ; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord : and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation¹.”

We are here to observe, first, a promise that the sacrifice thus prescribed should be accepted as an atonement for the offerer. It must therefore, by virtue of the divine appointment, have been effectual for the purpose of expiation. Now the appointed means of that expiation consisted in the destruction of life, or in substituting an innocent life for one which was forfeited to justice ; as will plainly appear from a subsequent passage in the same book : “ The life of the flesh is in the blood : and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls : for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul^m.”

Again, our attention is especially due to the ceremony of placing the hand upon the head of the victim. Of this also an explanation is furnished in the directions, which, in another part of the same book, are given relating to the great day of expiation. “ And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness : and

¹ Lev. i. 2—5.

^m Lev. xvii. 11.

“ the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities
 “ unto a land not inhabited : and he shall let go the
 “ goat in the wilderness ⁿ.” Aided by this explanation, we are warranted in concluding, that the sacrifice to which we refer was not only expiatory in its design, but also vicarious in its import.

Another observation relating to this great day of annual solemnity will render our conclusion still more irresistible. By the employment of two goats in the sacrifice of that day, the general meaning and design of the ceremonial is exhibited in very striking and impressive characters. On this provision it is justly observed by an excellent and distinguished prelate: “ The reason of this seems obvious. The
 “ death of the animal was requisite to represent the
 “ *means* by which the expiation was effected : and
 “ the bearing away the sins of the people on the
 “ head of the animal was requisite to exhibit the
 “ *effect* ; namely, the removal of the guilt. But for
 “ these distinct objects, two animals were necessary
 “ to complete the sin offering^o.”

Such then are the essential characters of the Levitical sacrifice. The guilt of the worshipper is emblematically imputed to the victim : to the victim also is emblematically transferred the punishment which had been incurred : hence there results that atonement, which, by virtue of the Divine appointment, renders the sinner capable of pardon. And (on the leading principles of interpretation thus furnished to us) we contend that these discri-

ⁿ Levit. xvi. 21.

^o Magee on Atonement, vol. ii. p. 330.

minating properties belong to every species of sacrifice prescribed in the ritual of Moses : understanding the term *sacrifice* in that restricted sense which we have before assigned to it. All such sacrifices are both expiatory and vicarious.

II. The way is now prepared for a further inquiry into the character of sacrifice, with regard to its earliest observance and its universal prevalence.

That sacrifice was from the beginning an ordinance of Divine appointment, is a position of which the proof has been already adduced. In the Levitical code it stands confessedly on that foundation. Here then we see the same law operating after two distinct periods of its enactment. At the first of these periods (to which we refer the sacrifice of Abel) the observance of the law is made known, but without any explanation of its design : at the second, both the law is promulgated, and the explanation of it is annexed. Now as the law itself is contemplated as emanating from the supreme wisdom of the unchangeable God, I see not how the following inference can fairly be resisted ; namely, that the reason of it must have been the same in the first instance which it was avowedly in the second.

There is another consideration from which the necessity of this inference is strikingly apparent. The employment of blood as an article of food is forbidden to the Israelites. “ Whatsoever man there “ be,” says the Law, “ of the house of Israel, or of “ the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth “ any manner of blood ; I will even set my face “ against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut

“ him off from among his people^p.” But this prohibition, we are to observe, is not, at this period of its delivery, a new ordinance. It forms a part of that patriarchal law which had been delivered to Noah, and which had long been obligatory upon him and all his descendants. The old law is now, however, republished to the Israelites. On this occasion the reason of the prohibition, which had been stated, though less explicitly, before, is fully and distinctly annexed: “ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: “ and I have given it to you upon the altar to make “ an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood “ that maketh an atonement for the soul^q.” Here then we have the reason of the law which had many years before been delivered to Noah. Now Noah was himself a sacrificer: so was Abraham. Both of these were anterior to the law of Moses. The same reason must then be understood to apply to the sacrifices which they offered; and consequently their sacrifices must have had the same character which belongs to those of the Mosaical ritual. They must have been sacrifices of atonement for the soul^r.

^p Levit. xvii. 10.

^q Lev. xvii. 11.

^r If a doubt should be started whether the law, at the two periods of its promulgation, was grounded on the same or on a different reason, that doubt must disappear on a comparison of the terms which are severally employed in Scripture in relation to the two occasions. The reason is given in Leviticus thus: “ *The life of the flesh is in the blood*; and I have given it “ to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls.” This same reason, though not so fully, is at least sufficiently expressed in the prohibition to Noah: “ But *flesh with the life* “ *thereof, which is the blood therefore, shall ye not eat.*” If fur-

Sacrifice, then, at a time much earlier than the law of Moses, must have been both expiatory in its design and vicarious in its import. If we admit the validity of the reasoning which has been offered in support of this proposition, it must appear conclu-

ther proof of this point were wanted, it would be found by referring to a third occasion, where the same prohibitory law is delivered. Here the reason of the law is stated in an elliptical form, similar to that in which we find it annexed to the earliest prohibition which was delivered to Noah; and yet nobody, I think, would contend, that the reason in this latter instance was not intended to be precisely the same with that which is given in the above cited passage from Leviticus. The words are as follows: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: *for the blood is the life*; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." Deut. xii. 23. That the reason delivered in Leviticus was not a reason of exclusive application to the Levitical ritual and the people of Israel, will be further evident from examining the terms of the prohibition: for it will thus appear to have been equally obligatory upon Israelite and Gentile, as far as the law of Moses was capable of being enforced; and the reason on which it was grounded will be seen to apply in an equal degree to the condition of both. "Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. THEREFORE I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood." Lev. xvii. 10, 11, 12. Surely, after reading this, we cannot deny that blood was, to the Gentile as well as to the Israelite, and upon the same vicarious principle, the appointed means of making atonement for the soul. See Revelation examined with Candour, vol. ii. Dissert. I.

sive against Spencer, Warburton^s, and others, who maintain, that the sacrificial ordinance never assumed this character before the promulgation of the law: when, say they, it was copied from the superstitious observances of the idolatrous world, and remodelled on its introduction into the Mosaic code for the purpose of accommodation to the Christian scheme of redemption.

The general conclusion deduced from that reasoning must further appear to have a very extensive application. The reason for the prohibition of blood which is assigned in Leviticus, applies in an equal degree to the same interdiction as it was delivered to Noah. It therefore stamps upon his sacrifice the same expiatory and vicarious character which belongs to the Levitical sacrifice. Again, the same interdiction is obligatory upon all the descendants of Noah who lived before the time of Christ^t. The reason of the interdiction must therefore equally apply to them: and consequently, their sacrifices, so far as they retained the proper character belonging to the original design and first institution of this ordinance, must in like manner fall under the same description. And thus do we gain an insight into the proper design and essential meaning of sacrifice, as it hath prevailed among all the families of man-

^s Spencer de Legg. lib. iii. Diss. II. Warburton's Div. Leg. b. ix. c. 2.

^t Whether it were obligatory after this time or not, I am not here called upon to decide. The arguments in favour of the affirmative may be gathered from Delany, Revelation examined with Candour, vol. ii. Diss. II.; and those in support of the negative from Spencer de Legg. Diss. in Act. xv. 20. vol. i. p. 588.

kind who have sprung from that second founder of the human race.

III. It remains for us, lastly, to examine the nature of sacrifice as it was observed by Abel, and also (as we have a fair right to assume) by the other inhabitants of the antediluvian world. Let us therefore carry up our inquiry to a still higher point, in order that we may discover whether the same character belongs to it in this earliest period of its prevalence.

We have seen then, that the eating of blood was forbidden to Noah and his posterity. Antecedently to this date, no such prohibition is upon record. That it is not, is a circumstance capable of a very plain and natural explanation. Such an injunction, at any earlier period, would have been nugatory, since this is the date of the first permission of animal food. "Every moving thing that liveth," says the sacred record, "shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat^u." The reason for the prohibition of blood was, as we have seen, because it was invested with a sacred character as the appointed instrument of atonement and expiation: and this character must have belonged to it as long as sacrifice had continued to be in use. The prohibition itself is grounded on the expiatory design of sacrifice: but the date of the prohibition is occasioned by the simultaneous grant of animal food. And the sacred instrumentality of blood for the pur-

^u Gen. ix. 3, 4.

pose of atonement, must appear to be recognised in this interdiction as belonging to an ordinance then existing. For sacrifice had been a rite of much earlier observance. It had been offered acceptably to God in the time of Adam : it had been offered acceptably by Noah himself before this very command had been issued. Such being the case, our inference respecting the character of sacrifice must be extended in its application to the antediluvian sacrifices during the whole course of their observance. They also must have been both expiatory and vicarious.

Though the blood of brutes possess no intrinsic efficacy towards cleansing the defilements of a sinful creature ; yet it was, by a Divine ordinance, rendered available, and even necessary, for that purpose, through the operation of faith on the part of the worshipper. It is declared in the writings of Moses, that “ it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul^x.” “ Almost all things,” says the apostle to the Hebrews, “ are by the law purged with blood ; “ and without shedding of blood is no remission^y.” This is not a principle exclusively attached to the Levitical system. It was, as we have seen, before the existence of that system, a principle on which, in the article of sacrifice, the universal religion of mankind was established. It is the only scriptural principle on which the sacrificial rite can be explained. It is the only scriptural principle on which the forgiveness of man is made compatible with the attributes of his Maker. The sacrificial ceremony, in-

^x Levit. xvii. 11.

^y Heb. ix. 22.

deed, before the Gospel, is emblematical, and its efficacy sacramental: under the Gospel, the sacrifice of Christ is real and effectual. But still, with a due observance of this distinction, we are justified in the terms we have employed respecting it. It is a principle alike recognised and attested in the Levitical sacrifice, and in the Christian sacrament.

It will not be unsuitable to observe in this place, that there always have been in the church of God certain instituted ordinances, appointed as the vehicles for conveying the assurance and experience of the Divine favour, and in the right observance of which, man, by the expression of his faith, may be qualified to partake of that favour. This at least has been the case, where Scripture has been explicit in its communications: and we are warranted by the general principle of inductive reasoning, in concluding that it has been so where Scripture is less decisive.

Shall we then say, that the holy worshippers of God before the flood were destitute of any sacramental means of Divine appointment, by which they might, in the exercise of faith, obtain remission of sin? Such an opinion is plainly irreconcilable with what is recorded respecting the faith and piety of Abel, Enoch, and Noah: for these primitive worshippers doubtless stood in need of atonement, and doubtless must have had the benefit of it; otherwise they could not have rendered that acceptable service to God, which we are assured that they did. Is it not more reasonable, after having traced the sacrifice of Abel to the command of God, to take the explanation of that observance from God him-

self, who says, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul?"

On the grounds which have now been stated, we maintain, that sacrifice must have had the same expiatory design and vicarious import as an antediluvian ordinance, which we have proved to belong to it in the later ages of its observance.

Thus, by three progressive steps of inquiry, and under three divisions which embrace the whole compass of the subject, we have endeavoured, we trust successfully, to fix and ascertain the genuine character of the sacrificial ordinance, connected with its first appointment, and actually belonging to it in every instance of its right observance, throughout the utmost extent and duration of its prevalence. We have endeavoured to prove, that this character is the same with that which is explicitly fixed and defined in the Levitical code. The properties therefore, thus essentially belonging to it as a Mosaical ordinance, may justly be ascribed to the same ordinance in its primitive and more diffusive observance. It may assist towards a just conception of these properties, if we observe, that it is designated by the apostle to the Hebrews as "a shadow of good things to come"; and that the building appointed for its solemnization is spoken of as "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience^a." We are also to observe, that the blood of bulls and of goats, which constitutes a part of the shadow or outline, is by

^z Hebrews x. 1.

^a Hebrews ix. 9.

the same apostle contrasted with the blood of Christ himself, wherewith “ he entered in once into the “ holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for “ us ^b.” And independently of the characters belonging to the Levitical sacrifice, we find the meritorious blood of Christ designated as “ the blood “ of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that “ of Abel ^c:” the blood of Abel plainly denoting in this place, as the tenor of argument requires us to understand, the blood of his sacrifice, and the style of expression manifestly implying an affinity, as well as declaring an inferiority, in *his* sacrifice to that of Christ. These various expressions sufficiently indicate, with regard to the sacrificial ordinance in general, its emblematical reference to that great meritorious sacrifice of infinite value, which is to a fallen and sinful race the only fountain of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life. But a fuller discussion of this point will form the proper object of the following section.

SECTION III.

The use and importance of Sacrifice considered as a subordinate and temporary provision belonging to the general plan of revealed religion.

Ἔως μὲν οὖν οὐδεπῶ το κρείττον, οὐδε το μέγα καὶ τιμιον καὶ θεοπρεπεὺς σφαγιον παρὴν ἀνθρώποις, ταῖς δια ζῶων θυσίαις ἄττρα τῆς ἑατῶν ζωῆς καὶ ἀντιψύχα τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως προσηκόντως ἀποδιδόναι χρὴν τῷ Θεῷ. — Επεὶ δὲ το τέλειον παρὴν, τοῖς τῶν προφητῶν ἀκολουθῶς θεσπισμασι, πεπαύτο

^b Hebrews ix. 12. ^c Hebrews xii. 24. See Magee on Atonement, p. 58. and No. LXVIII.

ΤΑ ΠΡΩΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΔΕΥΤΟ ΠΑΡΑΧΡΗΜΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟ-
ΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΛΗΘΟΥΣ ΊΕΡΟΤΡΙΑΣ. Eusebii Demonst. Evang.
I. 10.

THE universal observance of the sacrificial rite previously to the time of our Saviour, is a fact, the certainty of which is established by numerous concurrent testimonies. Indeed there are few truths which have less been the subject of debate. We may add, that the notion of its expiatory and vicarious character has, generally speaking, been commensurate with its prevalence^d. The rite itself has indeed been perverted to the worship of improper objects; it has been intermixed with the false superstitions of the pagan world: but still the observance of it, during the specified period, was universal, and the notions entertained respecting its purport and meaning were generally agreeable to those leading principles which it has been our desire to establish.

Where now can you discover an adequate cause for so extensive an effect? When you contemplate an usage and a sentiment so widely prevailing, so deeply rooted, and so long established; will you suppose, that they can have had their origin in the crude, the arbitrary, and the variable, fancies of men, which fluctuate in every age, and climate, and nation, and, we might almost say, in every individual? If not, there is but one alternative which you can reasonably choose: and that is, to regard

^d Of this point satisfactory proof is afforded by an induction of particulars gathered from various authors, in Outram de Sacr. c. xxii., and still more at large in Archbishop Magee's work on Atonement and Sacrifice, Diss. Nos. v. and xxxiii. It is also fully admitted by Sykes. Essay on Sacrifices, pp. 121, 303, 310.

it as an institution resulting in the first instance from a Divine appointment, and afterwards diffused and perpetuated by traditionary or other records through the mass of mankind.

With regard to the extent of its reception, sacrifice stands upon the same footing with those fundamental truths of natural religion, the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul : and the reasoning by which the truth of these latter doctrines is made an inference from their universality, is equally applicable to the former. “ Non id collocutio hominum, aut consensus effecit : non institutio opinio est confirmata, non legibus. Omni autem in re, consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est^c.” Let us only be allowed to understand by a law of nature, what it properly means, namely, an ordinance of God ; and then the foregoing remark of Cicero will justly apply to our present subject.

This indeed is a consideration of some weight in its bearing on the present branch of our inquiry : the object of which is, to illustrate the importance of the sacrificial rite as a subordinate and a temporary provision in the general plan of revealed religion.

In pursuing this division of the subject, our first step will be, to fix and determine what efficacy was, by virtue of the Divine appointment, attached to the observance of sacrifice. This was either real, or sacramental.

The patriarchal or extra-Levitical sacrifice pos-

^c Tusc. Disp. I. 13.

sessed a sacramental efficacy towards obtaining pardon, and conciliating the Divine favour. This sacramental efficacy would, however, depend on the qualifications of the worshipper. Without faith and repentance it would be not only unavailing for the benefit of the offerer, but even offensive to the Deity. This might be made to appear by numerous citations from Scripture, the general purport of which is expressed in the words of the Son of Sirach : “ The most High is not pleased with the offerings of the wicked ; neither is he pacified for sin by the multitude of sacrifices^f.”

Such was the essential nature of sacrifice connected with its first appointment and true design. The law of Moses made no alteration in this its essential character, but only prescribed additional regulations respecting the occasions, and the manner, of its observance. The sacramental efficacy of the patriarchal ordinance belonged therefore in an equal degree to the Levitical : but the latter possessed exclusively a real efficacy which did not belong to the former. This was either political, which rendered it available towards protecting the Israelite from the temporal penalty denounced by law ; or else ceremonial, in which respect it was effectual in cleansing him from those defilements, by which he was disqualified from joining in the external services of the legal worship. But in no case whatever did sacrifice, whether Levitical or patriarchal, possess any real efficacy towards clearing the offender in the sight of God to whom satisfaction was due : for it is

^f Ecclus. xxxiv. 19.

impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

As a further step towards the illustration of our subject, we will proceed to analyse the nature of sacrifice, after a manner similar to that, by which we divide a whole into its component parts, or a compound body into its separate ingredients.

It may be said then to consist of two parts, a sacrament and an emblem. As a sacrament, it was the appointed means of conveying to the faithful worshipper the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God. As an emblem, it was designed to be the vehicle of instruction. And the kind of instruction it was intended to convey, would naturally be suggested by the contemplation of its piacular and vicarious character. It would be viewed, to use the words of an excellent prelate, “as a sensible and “striking representation of a punishment, which “the sinner was conscious he deserved from God’s “justice: and then, on the part of God, it would “be a public declaration of his holy displeasure “against sin, and of his merciful compassion to the “sinner ^g.”

Such was the instruction afforded to mankind by sacrifice. And herein do we discover some of the leading outlines of that stupendous plan for the recovery of fallen man, which the Gospel hath in these latter days exhibited to mankind in a complete and perfect form.

It was an appointment of infinite wisdom, that the great consummation of sacrifice by the cruci-

^g Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. i. p. 40.

fixion of the Son of God should not be carried into effect, till mankind for a long series of ages had experienced the evils connected with their fallen state, and resulting from the first transgression. By the same wisdom it was decreed, that the mystery of our redemption should be hid from ages and from generations. But the Lamb of God was, in the eternal purpose of God, slain before the foundation of the world: and numbers have been saved through his merits before the Divine purpose was actually fulfilled, numbers to whom, though the general promise of a deliverance was known, the manner of that deliverance was never unfolded. Meantime, while the great design was in preparation and progress, while it was veiled under an awful darkness, impenetrable to mortal eyes; it was fit that man should be taught, what was his own condition by nature, and what was the relation in which he stood to his Creator. This, I say, was fit, in order that he might be qualified for mercy and acceptance on such terms, as should be consistent with the inviolable attributes of God, and should not derogate from the authority of that law, which the Divine holiness was concerned to maintain.

Such was the use of that instruction which sacrifice was designed to afford. Man was hereby brought to feel and to acknowledge his guilty character and helpless condition; he saw, in the mode of worship prescribed for him, an affecting representation of that punishment which he had incurred; he was made sensible, that an awful satisfaction was due to the Divine justice before he could be capable of pardon: and yet, he was cheered with an assurance,

that the Deity was not implacable, but that mercy might in some way or other be obtained. But how the Divine perfections of mercy and justice could be brought to cooperate harmoniously for his welfare, this he never could understand : because he enjoyed no distinct knowledge that the Son of God would die for the expiation of his sins.

Thus was the plea of self-righteousness put to silence, and the humility of the contrite was raised into hope : and thus were laid the great foundations of an evangelical justification before the Gospel itself was published. The darkness of natural ignorance, under which religious hope and comfort, together with every incitement to obedience, would have been extinct, was relieved by a slender light, till the Sun of righteousness should himself arise and confer a more abundant illumination.

Sacrifice, being thus appointed as an instrument of symbolical instruction, becomes a standing ordinance. The celebration of it must be repeated, in order to perpetuate the instruction and to hand it down to succeeding generations. And the repetition must be frequent, in order to keep alive those principles of faith, those sentiments of piety, and those encouragements to obedience, which it was designed to awaken and cherish.

The reason is now plain why this ordinance should be discontinued under the Gospel. The sacrificial rite conveyed, in the way of symbolical instruction, those principles which were to be embraced by the faith of mankind in order to their acceptance with God : but the symbol was no longer necessary, when the same instruction was afforded in a more

perfect manner, and a more abundant measure, by the reality which that symbol represented. Whatever was taught to mankind by sacrifice, is taught to them more fully, by the doctrine of our redemption through the cross of Christ. Agreeably to this view, the cessation of sacrifice is explained to us in the word of truth on these principles. "Christ hath appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself^h." "He hath been once offered to bear the sins of manyⁱ." "He hath taken away the first," namely, the symbolical sacrifice, "that he might establish the second^k," namely, the real and effectual sacrifice of himself. Of him it had been previously declared, long before the extinction of the old economy, that "he should cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease^l." That frequency of repetition which characterized the old sacrificial system, is now become needless. For as to any real *efficacy* towards the expiation of sin, they had none. They never could make the comers thereunto perfect : else they would have ceased to be offered. But this efficacy has been supplied by the meritorious sacrifice of Christ. In this view, then, the retention of the symbol must be unnecessary after the reality has arrived. And as to the *instruction*, which was darkly and symbolically conveyed in sacrifice, this is plainly enunciated in the Gospel : in which the type is superseded by the substance, and the outline by the perfect form.

But we have stated that the sacrificial rite was

^h Heb. ix. 26. ⁱ Ib. ix. 28; ^k Ib. x. 9.

^l Dan. ix. 27.

partly sacramental. With reference to this point, a few observations may here be fitly introduced.

It has in every age of the church (agreeably to a remark we formerly made) been a rule of the Divine government, to appoint certain outward ordinances, as the means of conveying to mankind the benefits which issue from the mercy of God : and the observance of these ordinances has been required on the part of men, as the commanded expression of that faith, by which they were to qualify themselves for the experience of those benefits. Of this nature were sacrifice and circumcision before the Gospel ; Baptism and the Lord's Supper under it.

We have shewn that sacrifice, considered as a vehicle of instruction, became unnecessary under the Gospel ; because the emblematical lesson which it taught was more fully and directly conveyed under the latter dispensation. Viewed however as a sacrament, it stands upon a different footing. In this character, the further continuance of that specific ordinance would have been useless : it would likewise have been degrading to the awful mystery which it had been employed to shadow out. Some corresponding ordinance was however wanting, as a standing means of grace, to supply its room. Sacrifice therefore being abrogated, a different ordinance is introduced in its place. Thus have we, in the Christian church, in agreement with the institution of its Divine founder, another symbolical representation of the great sin offering by which our redemption is effected. As the legal and patriarchal sacrifices had a prospective regard, so has the Lord's

supper a retrospective. The former was designed to convey instruction: the latter is intended to awaken remembrance. "Do this," says our Lord, "in remembrance of me." The instruction related to the guilt of man, and the satisfaction which was due to God. The remembrance points backward to that satisfaction which actually has been made, and calls forth a sense of those practical obligations which result from it. Both the ordinances were designed as the vehicles of benefit to those who duly partake of them: but the benefits connected with the Christian sacrament are far more abundant, or at least far more distinctly unfolded, than those connected with the other.

As a principal use of sacrifice, before the coming of Christ, consisted in the instruction afforded by its symbolical character; so does a corresponding usefulness result from it, as a matter of historical record, now that its obligation as a religious ordinance hath ceased. That which before the Gospel was a symbol, or instructive similitude, is now discovered to be a type, or proleptical representation of something future^m. In its symbolical character, the an-

^m The following explanation of types and symbols will assist towards illustrating the purport of the remarks contained in this section. "Typus (quatenus vox ista sensum habet theologicum) "ita definiri posse videtur, ut sit *futuri alicujus symbolum quoddam, aut exemplum ita a Deo comparatum, ut ipsius plane instituto futurum illud præfiguret. Quod autem ita præfiguratur, illud antitypus dici solet.*—Idem inter typum et symbolum interest, quod inter genus et partem. Æque enim Symbolum dici potest, quod præsens aliquod aut præteritum, ac quod (quæ typi ratio est) futurum aliquid adumbraverit.——Antitypus in typi locum succedit, eumque adeo loco movet; ut simul atque

cient worshipper learned from it, that satisfaction was due to God for the sins of man. As a type, *we* learn from it, that the purpose of God, respecting the mode of reconciling the world to himself, was in all ages the same; and we obtain from it an attestation to the person of the Messiah, similar to that which is afforded by prophecy, and differing from it only as an information by action differs from an information by words.

It remains for us to state with brevity the application of the principles deduced from the foregoing reasonings, to the general purpose we have in view.

That the Divine dispensations with regard to fallen man have, through every period of time, been conducted on a plan of harmony with the Christian scheme of redemption: that the hopes of a future life which God has, in various successive ages, afforded to the world, have uniformly been grounded on a basis congenial to the gospel of Christ: that his sacred ordinances have been invariably designed to separate such hopes from every self-righteous plea on the part of his worshippers; and to infuse into those

“ antitypus adsit, nullus deinceps typo locus, nullus usus reperia-
 “ tur. Deinde, (quod maxime advertendum) id inter antitypum
 “ et typum interest, quod quæ *revera* in antitypo vis inest, ea non
 “ nisi *specie tenus*, aut *gradu longe exiliori* in typo extiterit. Enim-
 “ vero quamvis (quod ante dictum est) typus nonnunquam rem
 “ aliquam cum antitypo suo communem habuerit, ea tamen res
 “ multo minus in typo, quam in antitypo, semper valet; quemad-
 “ modum mors earum victimarum, quibus mors Christi adumbra-
 “ batur, longe minorem apud Deum hominesque vim habuit, quam
 “ quæ ad mortem Christi pertinet.” Outram de Sacr. I. xviii.
 §. 1, 2.

who cherished them, a renunciation of merit and a conviction of personal guilt : these are the principles which we have chiefly endeavoured to establish. Towards the attainment of these ends the sacrificial ordinance was manifestly subservient. For, had the belief of a future state been left unguarded by any corrective, we can hardly doubt that it would have been grossly perverted by human pride. Thus would man, polluted by nature, and guilty by actual transgression, in presenting himself before his Maker as a candidate for immortal happiness, have claimed the joys of heaven as a debt owing to him from the justice of God. But these towering pretensions, so hostile to the doctrine of the cross, must sink into dust, when that worshipper of God beholds, in a mode of adoration prescribed by God himself, a representation of that blood which was to be poured out for the expiation of his sins. Man, when he worshipped his Creator through the medium of sacrifice, must have felt, if he worshipped him aright, that he had no foundation of merit on which to rest his pretensions ; that he was in himself the proper object of displeasure, not of favour ; and that he ought therefore to come unto God, not as a claimant of justice, but as a delinquent and a suppliant for mercy. Sacrifice was both designed and adapted to teach him this lesson. The feelings thus excited would harmonize with that scheme of redemption which was hereafter to be disclosed. They would qualify men to receive, according to the gracious purpose of God, the destined benefit which was to be obtained by the atonement of a Redeemer.

The same feelings would prepare and dispose mankind to embrace the faith of that Redeemer, when it should be proposed to them.

We have said, that without a corrective of this nature, the hopes of mankind respecting a future life would naturally have been associated with a reliance on human merit. How could it have been otherwise, if, without the instruction thus afforded, they had been blessed with the hope of everlasting happiness? Man could not have discovered his own inherent guilt and corruption under the light of nature and the guidance of his own reason: this is one of those truths, which the natural man is not capable of embracing, and which revelation only can make known to us. While future life was hoped for, and the anticipated blessing was viewed in its proper connexion with, and dependence on, the moral conduct of man; it would not have been possible for human blindness to have helped confounding the necessary condition with the meritorious cause. Had the repentance of a sinner been thus supplanted by the pride of imaginary virtue, and the justice of God been challenged for that reward which could issue only from his mercy, it is plain that the acceptance of man would have been incompatible with those inviolable attributes of the Deity, which revelation has discovered to us.

If the law had expressly promised life, the natural inference would have been, that the law could *give* life, and consequently that the gospel dispensation was unnecessary. If the hope of eternal life had been afforded separately from that instruction which

sacrifice conveys, then eternal life would have been claimed as the reward of merit. Sacrifice was therefore appointed, as a measure of subservience to the necessary instruction and discipline of those ages, during which a full developement of the evangelical scheme would have been premature.

While the sacrificial ordinance was thus adapted to operate as a guard against the abuse to which the doctrine of a future state was liable, it would at the same time yield the strongest support and confirmation to that doctrine itself.

The original and inborn corruption of the human race, indeed, is a doctrine, which man by nature cannot discover, and to which, even when favoured with better guidance, he frequently evinces no little repugnance. But as to the actual guilt of each individual, the consciousness of this must be inherent in every mind, which has been instructed in the common principles of moral obligation. How then by a being, thus labouring under an inward conviction of guilt, could the hope of eternal life have been warrantably entertained? To him sacrifice, viewed as a divine institution, would open a door of hope: it would convey an assurance in unison with the true foundation of a believer's confidence. Being of universal prevalence, it would speak with an authority, little inferior to a dictate or an instinct of nature, proclaiming to mankind the placability of God ⁿ, and the pos-

ⁿ “ The various methods of propitiation and atonement which
“ fear and folly have dictated, or interest and artifice tolerated, in
“ the different parts of the world, however they may sometimes re-
“ proach and degrade humanity, at least shew the general consent
“ of all ages and nations in their opinion of the placability of the

sibility of their own forgiveness. Thus would the hope of a future life at once be strengthened and placed upon its right basis. Thus would man be put in possession of that great evangelical principle, in which God has provided the springs of comfort to a sinner in the prospect of death: a principle which natural religion could never teach, but without which neither the proof of future rewards could ever be established, nor the hope of them warrantably entertained.

I will conclude with the words of a learned and pious divine, which apply with equal propriety to the subject of this and of the foregoing chapter. "Whensoever we find God," says Dr. Stanhope, "promising pardon, and admitting men to reconciliation and friendship with him, there is involved a virtual promise of future happiness and immortality. Consequently, every prediction of a Redeemer and recovery from sin, every sacrifice instituted and offered from the beginning of the world, whereby the offerer was represented as at peace with God, his guilt transferred upon the beast, and a vicarious punishment accepted for his own; each of these, I say, was a shadow and pledge of a future happiness. And in this respect, the assurances of life and immortality are of a date with our first parents' fall °."

"Divine Nature." Rambler, No. 110. "Sacrifice teaches, that though life be the forfeit of sin, yet God will, in mercy, accept another life in lieu of the offender's." Rev. exam. with Candour.

° Boyle's Lectures, vol. i. p. 701.

CHAPTER VI.

SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE DOCTRINE
WHICH HAS BEEN MAINTAINED IN THE FOREGOING
CHAPTERS.

THE foregoing parts of this dissertation have not been wanting, we trust, in that submission to the authority of Scripture which ought to predominate in every religious inquiry. It seems however desirable, that a more particular attention should be bestowed on certain portions of the sacred writings, the language of which discovers a remarkable concurrence and harmony with that general view of the subject, the justice of which we are desirous to maintain.

The general tenor of Scripture, in the views of a future life which are afforded in both the Old and New Testaments, seems designed to exhibit the prospects of happiness in that state, as subsisting only in connexion with, and in dependence upon, the sacrifice of Christ. That sacrifice is therein set forth to us, as the only meritorious cause of man's justification, and therefore, by necessary consequence, the indispensable foundation of his hopes respecting a future life. The doctrine of life and immortality is peculiarly and exclusively the doctrine of the cross of Christ. It is a stream issuing from the wounds of the Redeemer.

Thus, it is designated by St. Paul as "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus ^p:" a form of words which manifestly indicates, that the doctrine thus described was peculiar to the Christian plan of re-

demption, and one by which it was essentially distinguished from every other religious dispensation.

“Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given *“which could have given life,* verily righteousness *“should have been by the Law⁹.”* The Law contained in itself no provision, by virtue of which righteousness could be imputed to man: in other words, it provided no means of human justification. This deficiency arose from two causes. First, it imposed obligations which the fallen nature of man had never been able to fulfil: secondly, it provided no means intrinsically available towards expiating transgression; since it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats, which forms the matter of the Levitical sacrifices, can take away sin. The Law then, according to the text, was characterized by two deficiencies, both of which are supplied in that more perfect dispensation which hath succeeded in its place. It provided neither for the justification, nor the eternal happiness, of those who were subject to it. *If there had been a law which could have given life, then justification might have been by the Law.* How plainly are we directed, in this reasoning, to seek for that justification in the Gospel, which the Law could not afford. This very circumstance of defect in the latter dispensation, is urged, as the most cogent and irresistible motive for embracing the former. By the same form of reasoning we are authorized to conclude, that as justification cannot be by the Law, therefore the Law cannot give life. We

⁹ Gal. iii. 21.

see then, how closely united with each other are these two deficiencies of the Law. The Law cannot give eternal life, because it cannot give justification to man : for justification must necessarily in order of time be precedent to immortal happiness. Justification is effected, only through the merits of Christ : hence arises the necessity of a Redeemer. Justification is obtained individually, by that act of the mind, whereby a believer, among other necessary principles of faith, embraces the merits of Christ as the ground of his hope : hence arises the necessity of believing the Gospel.

We therefore conclude, that the Law did not *promise*, because it could not *give*, eternal life. For if the Law could not give eternal life, it is plain, that a promise of that blessing could never have been introduced into it as its appropriate sanction. If however that promise had, in express terms, been in any way introduced into the Law, how could it have been kept separate and distinct, in the contemplation of the Israelite, from the sanction itself? We may ask again, if the Law had disclosed such a promise, where would have been the inducement to embrace the Gospel? Where would have been those striking marks of excellence and superiority, by which the latter is now so conspicuously distinguished in its contrast with the earlier dispensation? How would it have been possible, on this supposition, to have established the doctrine of justification on that footing on which the apostle has now placed it? Would it not in that case have obviously occurred to every Jew and judaizing Christian, to have replied to the above cited argument of St. Paul, which is now unanswer-

able: "But the Law *can* give life, since it plainly "promises it: therefore, justification *is* by the Law."

The process of reasoning on this subject will be shortened, if we adopt the interpretation of the learned and venerable Bishop Bull: who observes with reference to this text, that "the law is said to "give, that which it *promises*." ^r Agreeably to this view (which indeed seems perfectly natural and unobjectionable) the reasoning of the Apostle will stand thus: *If there had been a law given which could have promised eternal life, then justification would have been by the Law.*

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and "brethren, that through this man is preached unto "you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that "believe are justified from all things from which ye "could not be justified by the law of Moses ^s." These words contain a full and satisfactory explanation of the reasons, why the promise of immortality appears in the Gospel, but is excluded from the Law. The Gospel provides for the forgiveness of sin, and the justification of sinful men. The Law provided for neither. Both however are, by the honour of God's attributes, indispensably necessary in order to eternal

"^r Dicitur lex id dare vel facere quod promittit. Sensus ergo "est: Si lex habuisset promissa vitæ, nempe æternæ, tunc etiam "homines per legem, veram ac spiritualem justitiam, vel veram "ac perfectam justificationem, hoc est, cum vitæ æternæ donatione conjunctam, assequi potuissent. At longe aliter se res habet: Lex promissa tantum continet ad hanc vitam spectantia; "adeoque neque ad veram pietatem homines adducere, nec perfectam justificationem ipsos donare, potis est." Bulli Harmonia Apostolica, Diss. Post. cap. x. §. 6.

^s Acts xiii. 38, 39.

life. How then could the Law, deficient as it was in these previous requisites, afford a promise of eternal life? It is said of Christ, as a mark of superiority to the Levitical priests, that “ he hath obtained a more “ excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established “ upon *better promises*^t.” Whether among these better promises that of eternal life be included, can hardly, I should think, to any reflecting mind admit of a doubt : for with regard to the blessings of this life, the promises of the Law could not be surpassed. We are to observe then that this promise, the promise of eternal life, is by the apostle essentially connected with the ministry and priesthood of Christ. The text indeed speaks of more promises than one as peculiar to the Christian, in contradistinction from the Mosaic covenant : and we shall hereafter have occasion to treat of the others, and to shew that they, like the promise of eternal life, could not consistently have been annexed to any earlier revelation. The apostle proceeds : “ For if that first “ covenant had been faultless, then should no place “ have been sought for the second^u.” What is this but to say, that if the promises of the Gospel had been anticipated in the Law, the Gospel itself would have been unnecessary ? Certainly it would : and so it must reasonably have been esteemed by all who lived under the Law.

“ The record that God gave of his Son is this : “ that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this “ life is in his Son*^x.” How strange must this have appeared, if before the Lamb of God was manifested,

^t Heb. viii. 6.^u Ib. ver. 7.^x 1 John v. 11.

the promise of eternal life had been conveyed by the ministry of Moses, or annexed to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons.

In the following words, the gift of eternal life is inseparably connected, not only with the person, but also with the sacrifice, of Christ. “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him*. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*.” The love of God in giving eternal life to us, is the same with the love of God in appointing his Son to expiate our sins. Our benefit is the effect of that sacrifice : for the gift of eternal life, and the sacrifice of Christ, are spoken of as the same act on the part of God. This indeed is the uniform tenor of Scripture. Yet it is surely difficult to conceive, how such language could have been in any degree credible, if the promise of eternal life had been clearly unfolded in those ages, to which the sacrifice of the Son of God was not communicated.

That every prophecy of the Old Testament which was understood to relate to the Messiah, would properly be viewed as containing in itself an implied promise of a future and immortal life, is a proposition of which we have already endeavoured to evince the truth. There appears indeed, throughout the whole progress of revelation, a studied design to exhibit the person of the Messiah and the

doctrine of a future state, as subsisting together in close and inseparable union. Thus, while the Messiah continues veiled under the types and obscure prophecies of the law, the doctrine of immortality is veiled also. The doctrine is discovered and made known in nearly the same degrees, from time to time, that the Messiah is. The proofs of the doctrine are the same with the testimonies to the Messiah. And when, lastly, the veil of mystery is removed from the Messiah, it is also removed from the doctrine of a future state. The Son of God is manifested in the flesh, and life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.

Conformable to this view are those remarkable words of our Saviour: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have *eternal life*: and they are they which testify *of me*." Here the doctrine of a future state, as far as it may be gathered from the scriptures of the Old Testament, is plainly identified by our Lord, with the testimony which those scriptures bear to himself. It will not be amiss to annex in this place the explanation of these words, which is given, in a paraphrase, by the learned prelate whom I have just quoted. "You attribute to the law of Moses more than belongs to it. You think that eternal life is promised to those who fulfil the precepts of the Law, and that the doctrine of life is expressly contained in those books. If however you will not only read, but attentively weigh and consider, (for such is the force of the term in the original language^a,) you will readily

^z John v. 39.

^a Ερευνάτε.

“ acknowledge, that those writings *point at me, and*
 “ *direct you to me as the fountain and giver of*
 “ *eternal life*, and to that spiritual righteousness
 “ which I teach, as the only way of attaining it^b.”
 The justice of this exposition will appear more forcibly from considering the words which immediately follow in the sacred text: “ And ye will not
 “ come to *me*, that ye might *have life*^c.” Here the connexion of the two subjects is again insisted upon.

The argument we are now maintaining may perhaps appear more convincing, after an attentive observation, framed on a collective view, of the various passages in the Old Testament which relate to the two subjects, namely, a Messiah and a future life. From such observation it will appear, if I mistake not, that the notices afforded to successive ages of the church respecting these two most important subjects, have kept pace with each other: that is to say, that they have been nearly parallel in order of time, and that the progressive announcements of them both respectively, have been marked by degrees of clearness, progressively and equally increasing.

Thus, the earliest intimation of a Redeemer is shrouded in darkness and mystery. “ I will put
 “ enmity between thee and the woman, and between
 “ thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head,
 “ and thou shalt bruise his heel^d.” At the same time, the doctrine of a future life is enveloped in that intimation, and partakes of all the mystery of the intimation itself. The same holds good as to

^b Bull's Harm. Apos. Diss. Post. X. §. 17.

^c John v. 40.

^d Gen. iii. 15.

the various successive prophecies of the Messiah. We have already proved, that in these prophecies the doctrine of a future life is always implicitly contained, and that the two subjects are treated as if they were one and the same. This must be borne in mind in order to obviate repetition : and the general conclusion arising from it will be further strengthened, if it shall appear, that wherever any separate intimations are afforded, relating exclusively to the latter subject, the measure of discovery contained in them is proportioned to the measures of knowledge which had been communicated to the same ages respecting the plan of our redemption.

Carrying on our view then through a long tract of those early ages, during which the communications afforded on both these subjects are comparatively scanty and obscure, and conveyed chiefly in the passages to which we have already referred^c, and in which they are found united together as one subject : we come at length to the era of David. Here, in the Psalms which were composed by him, both the doctrine of eternal life and the notices respecting a future Redeemer, appear to open by equal gradations into a developement, which surpasses all foregoing declarations in clearness and particularity of detail. Herein are contained, not only a promise of the Messiah, but an accurate description of him, as a man of suffering and humiliation, and of that death by which he was to expiate the sins of the world. These passages are so well known, as to supersede the necessity of citation. Contemporaneous with

^c Chap. iv. §. 3.

these are certain passages of the same book, in which the doctrine of everlasting life seems to be declared more distinctly than it had been in any of the earlier scriptures. To this effect is the following. The royal Psalmist prays to God for deliverance from the wicked, whom he describes as “the men of the world, *who have their portion in this life* :” he further depicts them as living in the enjoyment of the favours of heaven, blessed with children, and bequeathing to them their substance after death. With regard to these characters, and, as it were, in contrast with them, he expresses his own hope and confidence thus: “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: *I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness*^f.” A variety of other passages to the same effect are commonly alleged from this book. There are two, of which the language is strikingly applicable, by reason of their clearness, to this subject: but I do not lay any stress on them, because the dates of their composition and the authors are unknown. They are as follows: “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me^g :” and, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory^h.” But with regard to the general purpose of these citations, the writings of Solomon being subsequent to the prophetic declarations respecting the Messiah which are contained in the Psalms of David, and but little distant from them in the order of time, are an authority equally available with those Psalms themselves. In

^f Psalm xvii. 13, 14, 15. ^g Ib. xlix. 15.

^h Ib. lxxiii. 24.

the Book of Proverbs then, we are explicitly told, that “the righteous hath hope in his deathⁱ.” And in the book of Ecclesiastes, the nature of death is thus described: “The dust shall return to the earth “as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God “who gave it^k.” Let it not be said, that these latter words denote only the resumption of animal life by the Author and Giver of it. Such a construction is at variance with the general tenor and prevailing doctrines of the book: in which it is declared that God shall hereafter “bring every work “into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it “be good or whether it be evil^l;” while the judgment contemplated by the royal preacher is plainly fixed beyond the boundaries of a life, in which he acknowledges the unequal and promiscuous dispensations of Providence^m.

Still however there do not occur in the sacred writings of this age, any notices, respecting either the promised Redeemer or a future life, which are so plain and declaratory as those which we meet with in the next stage of our progress: the predictions of the Messiah contained in the Psalms being chiefly of such a character, that their meaning is explained, and their application determined, by the fulfilment of the events which they describe. But the next great epoch of discovery on both these subjects presents itself in the time of Isaiah.

Before however we introduce our quotations from Isaiah, it will be important to notice a passage in the writings of a prophet who was contemporary

ⁱ Proverbs xiv. 32.

^k Eccles. xii. 7.

^l Ib. xii. 14.

^m Ib. viii. 14. ix. 1, 2, 3.

with him. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.—I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction ⁿ.” Here the doctrine of eternal life and that of redemption appear to be inseparably connected; and nothing can more strikingly illustrate the union which, according to the Divine counsels, subsists between them.

Isaiah, as I have formerly had occasion to observe, delivered the earliest of those prophecies respecting a suffering and dying Redeemer, which might have been distinctly understood before the time of its accomplishment: and in this prophecy, the passion and humiliation of our Lord are clearly stated to have been designed, as a sacrifice of atonement and expiation for the sins of mankind. Here then, for the first time, is the mysterious mode of our redemption discovered, though in a distant prospect, to mortal eyes: and here also, in the writings of the same prophet, do we meet with declarations respecting a future state, framed with such perspicuity and force of language as Scripture had never before employed upon that subject. The following are instances: “He will swallow up death in victory^o.” “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead ^p.” “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none

ⁿ Hosea xiii. 9, 14.

^o Isaiah xxv. 8.

^p Ib. xxvi. 19.

“ considering that the righteous is taken away from
“ the evil to come. He shall enter into peace : they
“ shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his
“ uprightness^q.”

That something more than a mere cessation from trouble is denoted by the terms last quoted, will appear a reasonable construction of them, if we refer to that remarkable passage in the Revelation, where language of a similar complexion is employed to signify a state of immortality and positive happiness. “ I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto
“ me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the
“ Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that
“ they may rest from their labours ; and their works
“ do follow them^r.”

It is generally admitted, that the intimations of a future state are not unfrequent in the writings of the later prophets, and that they are therein conveyed in language comparatively explicit and declaratory. Now whatever clearness of discovery may be observed in their prophecies with relation to this subject, we are to observe, that these prophecies are subsequent in point of time to the clear declarations of Isaiah respecting the atonement of a suffering Redeemer. This should be duly considered, as a circumstance corroborative of the general principles we maintain.

There is however one passage in the prophet Daniel, which ought not to be passed over without particular remark. Its application to a future state and a future retribution is plain and incontrovertible. “ Many of them that sleep in the dust of

^q Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.

^r Rev. xiv. 13.

“ the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, “ and some to shame and everlasting contempt^s.” These words are found in the writings of the same prophet, who has elsewhere declared in the plainest terms, that “ Messiah shall be cut off, but not “ for himself^t.” Thus closely united, in the views which Divine wisdom has afforded us, are the doctrines of atonement and eternal life ! Further we need not go ; unless we would carry on our view to the Lamb of God bleeding on the cross. Here you behold the Redeemer himself, in the agonies of that very sacrifice by which our peace was made, judicially awarding for the first time the sentence of eternal life : “ Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt “ thou be with me in paradise^u.”

We will now advert to a portion of the sacred writings, which preeminently calls for our most attentive consideration ; because it relates to us the manner in which our blessed Lord, after confuting the objection of the Sadducees to the doctrine of the resurrection, retorted upon his adversaries the proof of that doctrine from the authority of the Pentateuch. “ Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do “ err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of “ God.——But as touching the resurrection of “ the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken “ unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abra- “ ham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Ja- “ cob ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the “ living^x.”

^s Dan. xii. 2. ^t Ib. ix. 26.

^u Luke xxiii. 43.

^x Matt. xxii. 29, 31, 32.

“ The argument thus advanced,” says the learned Pococke, “ is wholly irrefragable and unanswerable. “ You cannot evade the force of it, unless you will “ say, that the promises which God made to the patriarchs were never fulfilled, and that the law of “ Moses is false from beginning to end. For, why “ should God be designated the God of Abraham, “ Isaac, and Jacob, more than of other men, unless “ it be that he conferred upon them greater and “ more numerous blessings than upon others? But “ these distinctions of favour were never experienced “ by them during the present life. Many, far less “ distinguished than they were by fidelity to God, “ have passed through this life in greater happiness “ and affluence. You must therefore admit, that “ the season appointed for their remuneration was “ after the expiration of this life, and that they “ themselves must have survived the death of the “ body, or else that they will hereafter revive, in “ order that they may receive their reward : this “ you must admit, unless you will suppose, what “ none but a downright atheist would say, that these “ promises were false and delusive on the part of “ God. And further : when God thus addresses “ Moses after so many ages had elapsed since the “ death and burial of these patriarchs, he declares “ that he *is*, not that he *had been*, their God. “ Hence we learn the unchangeableness of God, and “ we also learn, that the patriarchs had not ceased “ to exist at the hour of death : since God is not the “ God of the dead, who cannot be sensible of his benefits, but of the living. They therefore live unto

“ God, and not they only, but all men : even now
 “ their souls remain, and their bodies will hereafter
 “ be restored to life^y.” As an evidence that these
 patriarchs died in the hope of a future reward, this
 writer proceeds to adduce the following passage
 from the Epistle to the Hebrews ; which is also par-
 ticularly entitled to our attention, by reason of the
 illustration it affords of the phrase, which furnishes
 the ground of our Lord’s reasoning. “ These all
 “ died in faith, not having received the promises,
 “ but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded
 “ of them, and embraced them, and confessed that
 “ they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
 “ For they that say such things make it manifest^z
 “ that they seek a country. And truly, if they had
 “ been mindful of that country, from whence they
 “ came out, they might have had opportunity to
 “ have returned. But now they desire a better
 “ country, that is, an heavenly : wherefore God is
 “ not ashamed to be called THEIR GOD : for he hath
 “ prepared for them a city^a.”

When God declares himself emphatically to be a
 God to Abraham^b, the expression must necessarily
 be understood to denote peculiar favour and kind-
 ness, and to imply the promise of peculiar benefits to
 him, in distinction from other men : for in any other
 sense of the term, God is equally a God to all men.
 It must be understood agreeably to that other form

^y Notæ Misc. in Portam Mosis, pp. 162, 3.

^z Εμφανίζουσιν. I have altered the version for the sake of ob-
 viating the ambiguity of the English phrase, *declare plainly*.

^a Heb. xi. 13—16.

^b Gen. xvii. 7.

of words in which God declares himself to be Abraham's "exceeding great reward^c." In what then was this favour displayed? in what did these benefits consist? and when was this reward conferred? If we look to the history of his life, we find, that he forsook his native land and his kindred at the call of God; that he went out, not knowing whither he went; that he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; that he dwelt in tents together with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise with himself; that his life was a life of faith, more animated by the hope, than comforted by the experience, of good. These things are far remote from the common notions of worldly happiness, and indeed inconsistent with them. It must therefore be evident, that when God revealed himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the words must have implied, that those patriarchs were then in existence, and in a capacity of enjoying that happiness which had been promised to them, but which, according to the proper import of the promise itself, they had never experienced while in the body.

Having offered these remarks for the purpose of illustrating the scope and cogency of our Saviour's argument, it is now necessary, that I should advert to the construction which has been put upon it by that great writer, with whose opinions the nature of my subject has sometimes necessarily brought me into collision.

"From Jesus's argument it appears," says War-

^c Gen. xv. 1.

burton, "that the separate existence of the soul " might be fairly inferred from the writings of Moses^d." At another time it was admitted that the early Jews believed the survival of the soul. "It " will be asked then," observes the same writer, "What were the real sentiments of these early Jews " concerning the soul? Though the question be a " little out of time, yet as the answer is short, I shall " give it here. They were doubtless the same with " those of the rest of mankind, who have thought " upon the matter; that IT SURVIVED THE BODY^e." After this admission, what shall we think of the following? "But having," he continues, "from Moses's " silence, and the establishment of another sanction, " no expectation of future rewards and punishments, " they simply concluded that *it returned to him " who gave it^f. But, as to any interesting specu- " lations concerning its state of survivorship, it is " plain they had none!*" What! They believed the immortality of the soul: they believed the doctrine, but regarded it with total apathy: a doctrine which has always been viewed by other men with supreme interest and trembling anxiety. It was in their minds an inert and quiescent principle, void of all influence on their conduct and their happiness:

^d Div. Leg. b. vi. §. 4. vol. 5. p. 419. Yet he contends that it was never intended that they should infer it! For this opinion and the reason of it, see book vi. note [II.]

^e Yet this belief is, in another place, said to have been entertained only as a *vague notion*; to have been *confined to few*; and those few only such as *thought any thing about the matter*. Book vi. §. 3. vol. 5. p. 388.

^f Eccles. xii. 7.

it stimulated no virtue, it restrained no wickedness, it yielded no consolation, it was unattended with hope or fear, joy or grief.

Was this then the sentiment entertained respecting the soul among a nation, who, in their religious advantages, far surpassed all the rest of mankind ? To ask an admission of this is surely making a very large demand on our credulity. The Epicureans professed the belief of a God : but their belief, whether philosophically or practically considered, was wholly useless. So according to this writer, the ancient Israelites believed the immortality of the soul, and their belief was equally useless ; though it cannot be denied that this doctrine is, considered in itself and its effects, of the greatest necessity and importance towards the government and the happiness of mankind. Nature, we are told, does nothing in vain. That is to say, God, as the creator and governor of the natural world, does nothing in vain. This is a generally received principle : it is attested by our scientific researches, and forms a necessary consequence of our belief in the Divine attributes. Does not a just contemplation of those attributes dictate the same principle in regard to God's moral government of the world ? If this be the case, how can the opinion of this writer be reconciled to it.

As no writer however ought to be condemned before he has fully explained himself, justice requires that we should pursue the train of remark a little further. After stating that the early Jews entertained no interesting speculations respecting the soul in its state of survivorship, he proceeds thus : “ Indeed, how should they have any ? when

“ PERSONALITY did not enter into the idea of this
 “ *survivorship*, that being only annexed to the re-
 “ *wards and punishments* of a future state. Hence
 “ it was that those ancient philosophers (almost all
 “ the theistical philosophers of Greece) who consi-
 “ dered the soul as a SUBSTANCE distinct from the
 “ body, and not a mere QUALITY of it, (for they were
 “ not such idiots as to conceive, that *thought* could
 “ result from any combinations of matter and mo-
 “ tion,) those philosophers, I say, who considered the
 “ soul as a substance, and yet disbelieved a future
 “ state of rewards and punishments, denied it all fu-
 “ ture *personality*, and held the refusion into the
 “ το ἐν, or the soul of the world^g. And just such
 “ INTERESTING SPECULATIONS concerning it had
 “ the few philosophic Jews of the most early times,
 “ as appears from the book of Ecclesiastes, which
 “ speaks their sentiments. *Who knoweth* (says
 “ this author) *the spirit of man that goeth upward,*
 “ *and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward*
 “ *to the earth*^h? And again, ‘ Then shall the dust
 “ return to the earth as it was, AND THE SPIRIT
 “ SHALL RETURN UNTO GOD WHO GAVE ITⁱ.’
 “ Yet this writer, perfectly conformable to what I
 “ have delivered, says, at the same time: ‘ *But the*
 “ *dead know not any thing, neither have they ANY*
 “ MORE A REWARD; *for the memory of them is*
 “ *forgotten*^{k, l}”

Such reasoning is best answered by an application

^g “ See Div. Leg. b. iii.”

^h “ Ch. iii. 21. Vid Cler. et Drus. in loc.”

ⁱ “ Ch. xii. 7. Vid Cler. in loc.” ^k “ Chap. ix. ver. 5.”

^l Div. Leg. b. v. §. 6. vol. v. p. 196.

of the statements and principles furnished by the great writer himself. The doctrine which teaches that the human soul is consubstantial with the essence of the Deity; that it is taken out of that essence at the commencement, and absorbed into it at the termination, of the bodily life; and that it thus loses all distinct personality and consciousness at death: this doctrine is here stated to have been that, which was entertained by the early Israelites respecting the separate existence of the soul. One individual Jew^m within the last two centuries confessedly maintained the tenets thus described: but it would not be easy to advance an opinion more improbable, than that of supposing, that any single person of that nation had, at any earlier period, embraced so “re-fined, remote, far-fetched, and impious a notion,” as Warburton himself justly describes it. But let us take his own account of its origin and the time of its first introduction: from which it appears, that the notion itself was “purely Grecianⁿ,” that it was “a Greek invention^o,” that the first inventors of it were Pherecydes and Thales; and that it was generated by the peculiar genius of the Greek philosophy^p. It remains then to be explained, how the Israelites, in the age of Solomon, should gather the knowledge of a philosophical system about four hundred years before it was first introduced, from a nation with whom they had no intercourse or communication.

But the argument *ad hominem* may perhaps be

^m Spinoza.

ⁿ Div. Leg. b. iii. §. 4. vol. iii. p. 174.

^o Ibid. p. 179.

^p See the same work, pp. 174—

considered as better adapted to the purpose of alteration than of truth ; as more suited to the contradiction of an opponent than the confutation of his opinions. It will therefore be proper to add, that the view which Warburton has here taken of the subject can on no grounds whatever be maintained. The language of Solomon above cited is plainly inconsistent with the opinions of those who held the refusion of the soul into the Divine essence. For here “ the spirit of man which goeth upwards,” is distinguished in the strongest manner from “ the “ spirit of the beast that goeth down to the earth.” But the doctrine of the refusion (which we have described above, and which we have more fully explained in a former part of this work^q) contemplated the spirits of men and of beasts as having, in this respect, the same nature and the same destiny : both, when life departed from the body, were, according to this system, reunited to the parent substance out of which they were originally taken. This will appear on examining the philosophical principle ^r from which that abominable doctrine was deduced, and according to which, the distinction of the human and the brutal soul, as to the point in question, would have been inadmissible. It will also appear indisputably from various passages in ancient writers, where the doctrine of the refusion is described. The following from Virgil may serve as an example :

“ His quidam signis, atque hæc exempla secuti,

“ Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus

^q Page 141.
following note.

^r See the quotation from Servius in the

“ Æthereos dixere : Deum namque ire per omnes
 “ Terrasque tractusque maris, cælumque profundum.
 “ *Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,*
 “ Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas.
 “ Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri
 “ Omnia, nec morti esse locum^s.”

Among other topics of argument employed by Warburton for the proof of his position, that there was no popular expectation of a future state among the early Israelites ; he has alleged the positive declarations of the sacred writers. This species of evidence most incontestibly demands our attention : since, having maintained the contrary proposition, we are now desirous of evincing its conformity with Scripture.

We do not however feel ourselves called upon to enter into a minute examination of every citation which has been made for this purpose. Our reason is the

^s Georg. iv. 219. “ *His quidam signis atque hæc exempla secuti.*]
 “ Locum hunc plenius est executus in sexto [Æn. libro,] quem
 “ hoc loco breviter colligit, ut probet etiam apes partem habere
 “ divinitatis. *Namque omnia animalia ex quatuor elementis et di-*
 “ *vino spiritu constare manifestum est. Trahunt enim a terra car-*
 “ *nem, ab aqua humorem, ab aere anhelitum, ab igne fervorem : a*
 “ *divino spiritu ingenium.* Quod quia est in apibus sicut etiam
 “ in hominibus (namque metuunt, cupiunt, dolent, gaudent : quæ
 “ probantur ex his quæ faciunt : dimicant enim, colligunt flores,
 “ provident pluvias) fateamur necesse est *etiam apes partem ha-*
 “ *bere divinitatis.* Ex divino spiritu sumunt omnia, cum nasci
 “ coeperint, vitam : cæterum corpus ex quatuor elementis est, ut
 “ diximus. *Scilicet huc reddi.*] Sine dubio etiam cuncta dissolvi
 “ et redire rursus in originem suam necesse est. *Locum morti.*]
 “ Id est perditioni. Nihil est enim quod perire funditus possit,
 “ cum sit το παν, id est omne, in quod redeunt universa resoluta.”
 Servius in loco.

following. We appeal to certain undeniable principles of interpretation, which relate partly to the sacred language of Scripture, and partly, in a more extensive way, to the nature of human language in general: in the legitimate application of these principles, combined with a regard, partly to the general tenor of Scripture, and partly to distinct portions of it, we contend, respecting such evidence taken in the gross, cannot in justice be applied to the point in relation to which it is adduced. In order to the proof of this proposition we will divide into two classes the passages referred to.

I. Of these citations, some are adduced as speaking the direct and authoritative language of Scripture to the effect of declaring, that there is no future state. It might be thought needless to protest against such reasoning: we cannot suppress our astonishment and regret, that any Christian divine can be so far carried away by an intemperate zeal for his opinions as to venture on the employment of it. That we are not at liberty “so to expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another,” is the language of our church^t. We may add, that by all who receive the body of Scripture in the form in which we now receive it, as the word of God, and the revelation of God, it must be esteemed the language of common sense. If therefore such be the character of this sacred book, and if the doctrine of a future state be unquestionably contained in it; and that, not in the way of indirect allusion and historical narrative, but in that of direct and authori-

^t Art. XX.

tative declaration : if this be the case, then it must necessarily follow, that no passage in that book which is so construed, as to convey, on the authority of Scripture, a contradiction of that doctrine, can be construed according to its true meaning.

What then can we think of that system of reasoning and interpretation, which gravely alleges the names of David and Solomon, as of persons directly asserting, that death is the final extinction of consciousness in man? What shall we think of construing the words of the latter into a statement, and a sanction, of that pestilent dogma of the Greek philosophy, the refusion of the soul and consequent extinction of its personality? On the strength of the principle to which we thus appeal, of which neither the general truth nor the present application can be disputed by any believer in revelation, we say, that whatever be the right construction of the passages thus adduced, that which has been proposed by Warburton is wrong : and if it be, the passages themselves must at once, without the necessity of ascertaining their right signification, be pronounced wholly unavailing in evidence of the point in proof of which they are quoted.

To one of these passages I will, for the sake of example, more particularly advert. Solomon says, “ The living know that they shall die : but the dead “ know not any thing, neither have they any more a “ reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten^u.” This is the strongest of all the various citations which have been brought forward by Warburton for

^u Eccles. ix. 5.

the purpose we are considering. We have already said, that his construction of the words must be wrong, because it is contradictory to the general tenor of scripture. We say again that it is wrong, because it is contradictory to the general tenor of the doctrine delivered by the same writer, and contained in the same book. "Let us hear," says the preacher, "the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this "is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring "every work into judgment, with every secret thing, "whether it be good, or whether it be evil^x." Can it be disputed, that the motive of our obedience to the Divine law is here laid in the prospect of a Divine judgment and retribution? Is not this the doctrine of Solomon? And is it not most plainly declared by the same writer, that this judgment and this retribution do not take effect in the present life? Does he not, with regard to this present life, declare, that "there are just men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and "wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to "the work of the righteous^y?" that "no man "knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before "them? that all things come alike to all, and that "there is one event to the righteous and to the "wicked^z?" Is it not plain then, that the judgment which Solomon contemplated must have been the judgment of a future state, since he himself declares that no such judgment is to be seen or expected in this life?

^x Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

^y Ibid. viii. 14.

^z Ibid. ix. 1, 2.

On the strength of the foregoing considerations, we have a right to insist, that the words which we are now considering do not, as they are construed by Warburton, convey the meaning of Solomon. If this be admitted, nothing more can be required towards the disproof of the reasoning which has been constructed upon them: but it may be more satisfactory, if we state what we ourselves, in concurrence with various respectable commentators, conceive to be the proper design and purport of them.

We consider then the words, grammatically construed, to convey the very meaning which Warburton has ascribed to them: but we contend, that such meaning is not that of the royal preacher, but of a class of persons whom he strongly reprobates and condemns. We are to remember the characters of whom he had been speaking. He had described them after the following manner: "Their heart is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live^a." It seems moreover, that according to his view, the folly and wickedness thus imputed to them was occasioned by the fact, that there "is one event to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the sinner^b." Having thus stated the fact of a promiscuous dispensation, and the perverse construction which bad men are accustomed to put on such an aspect of things; he may be considered as expressing, in the words which immediately follow, the sentiments and the reasonings of such men. These following words are those

^a Eccl. ix. 3.^b Ver. 2, 3.

which Warburton has cited: and they may be regarded as expressing, not what he terms “the cool philosophy^c” of Solomon, but the madness of the epicurean voluptuary.

Whether a just account has now been given of the words in question, may be better determined after we have viewed them in their proper connexion with the foregoing and following context. I will therefore extract so much of the sacred writer’s discourse, as is necessary to illustrate the scope of what we conceive to be the argument which he is here pursuing: introducing at the same time a few brief remarks, for the purpose of illustrating the exposition which has been given of it.

“For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God:^d no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.”

Here Solomon may be understood to teach, that the appointed recompense of the righteous is, during the present state of things, a secret withholden from the observation of man; and that the promiscuous dispensations of Providence are the cause of its concealment from our view: the phrase, “in the hand of God,” being fitly taken, according to the idiom of scripture, to denote both the present secrecy, and the future accomplishment, of that recompense, and to intimate that, though now hidden

^c Div. Leg. b. v. §. 5. p. 183.

^d *In manu*; i. e. sub tutela et custodia. *In manu Dei sunt*, i. e. “occulta, nobis ignota. Cum vero cum homine aliquid communitur [Deus], tum dicitur *aperire manum suam*.” Poli Synopsis.

in futurity, it is not for that reason the less certain. He proceeds to the further statement of this cause, and also describes the effect which it produces in giving encouragement to the evil dispositions of men.

“ All things come alike to all : there is one event
 “ to the righteous, and to the wicked ; to the good
 “ and to the clean, and to the unclean ; to him that
 “ sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not : as is
 “ the good, so is the sinner ; and he that sweareth,
 “ as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among
 “ all things that are done under the sun, that there
 “ is one event unto all : yea, also the heart of the
 “ sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their
 “ heart while they live^c, and after that they go to
 “ the dead.”

From this place to the end of the following citation, he ought, we conceive, to be understood as speaking the sentiments, not of himself, but of those whose madness and folly he had just described.

^f “ For to him that is joined to all the living there
 “ is hope : for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
 “ For the living know that they shall die : but the
 “ dead know not any thing, neither have they any
 “ more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgot-

^c “ Indulgent insanis et brutis vanitatibus ; a recto hac occasione
 “ sumpta discedunt, et proni in scelera feruntur, *ob promiscuam omnium sortem.*” Poli Synopsis.

^f “ Loquitur ex persona Epicureorum.” Poli Synopsis ad loc.
 “ Si quis ea loca bene consideret, videbit Sapientem introducere
 “ Epicureum, vel istius farinae hominem loquentem, nullo alio fine
 “ quam ut eum refutet et coarguat.—Certum est in locis istis non
 “ loqui nisi homines impios et profanos : vel Solomonem in locis
 “ istis non loqui, nisi ex opinione impiorum et male feriatorum.”

Menasseh ben Israel de Res. Mor. l. i. c. 15.

“ ten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their
 “ envy, is now perished; neither have they any
 “ more a portion for ever in any thing that is done
 “ under the sun. Go thy way, eat thy bread with
 “ joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for
 “ God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments
 “ be always white; and let thy head lack no oint-
 “ ment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou
 “ lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which
 “ he hath given thee under the sun; all the days of
 “ thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this^s life, and
 “ in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.
 “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy
 “ might^h; for there is no work, nor device, nor
 “ knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou
 “ goestⁱ.”

^s The word *this* is not in the original text; and the omission of it is more suitable to the character to whom we conceive that this sentiment belongs, namely, that of a person who disowns the belief of any other life than the present.

^h “ Quæcunque tibi honestæ hilaritatis occasio inciderit, eam
 “ dum vivis arripe. Nec labori nec sumptui parce, ut voluptates
 “ vel commoda vitæ consequaris. Quod prius per partes exse-
 “ quutus est, jam universum enunciat: q. d. Longum esset omnia
 “ persequi quibus ad jucundissimam vitam iter, musicam, cupi-
 “ dias, &c. quæ omnia hortor te insectari.” Poli Syn.

ⁱ “ Non est in sepulcro operis quidquam. Nihil ibi est quod vel
 “ agas, vel patiaris.” Idem. “ Hæc est Epicureorum sententia, et
 “ hæc [scil. quæ dicuntur versibus præcedentibus] sunt ista opera
 “ ad quæ inducit homines ista opinio.” Menasseh ben Israel de
 Res. Mort. l. i. c. 15. The exposition thus given of this last cited
 verse seems most agreeable to the purport of the discourse:
 though it cannot be denied that it is commonly supposed to carry
 a very different meaning, being generally understood to inculcate
 the prompt and zealous fulfilment of our duties. It is not indeed

Few figures of speech are more common than the expression of another person's sentiments without the introductory form of quotation. We have, in the present instance, only to suppose that omission supplied^k: the language here employed will then convey the natural sentiments of a character, very different from that of a moral teacher like Solomon, who inculcates, as the great springs of human conduct, the fear of God and the prospect of a future judgment. We find in the writings of St. Paul a sentiment, equally inconsistent with the character of the writer: it is indeed the very same sentiment with that which we have been considering, and introduced in a manner equally abrupt, without any intimation of a change in the speaker: "Let us eat and drink,

the only form of words which, according to the difference of its interpretation, may supply a fit motto for a sinner or a saint: as may be seen from the following.

Dum vivimus vivamus.

"Live while you live," the epicure would say,

"And seize the pleasures of the present day."

"Live while you live," the sacred preacher cries,

"And give to God each moment as it flies."

Lord, in my view let both united be:

I live in pleasure when I live to thee! *Doddridge.*

^k A supposition, we may add, to which we must on many occasions necessarily resort, in order to the right understanding of this book of Ecclesiastes: since, according to the just observation of Menasseh ben Israel, it abounds with passages which are at first sight plainly contradictory to each other. That learned Jew has the following observation respecting these apparent contradictions.

"Cum hoc non sit hominis mediocri tantum sapientia præditi, sibi ipse tam aperte et toties contradicere, quis hoc de illo suspicetur, quem Deus mortalium omnium sapientissimum reddidit?" De Resur. i. 15.

“ for to-morrow we die.” But in the latter instance, says Warburton, “ it is brought in to be confuted “ and condemned ^l :” for it is immediately followed by these words, “ Be not deceived : evil communica-
“ tions corrupt good manners ^m.” I would ask then, for what other purpose than that of confutation and censure, are such sentiments introduced by Solomon in a work, where we find them explicitly contradicted by his own deliberate and serious opinions? For it is deserving of remark, that there does not occur, in this whole passage, a single sentiment, which is not plainly repugnant to those sentiments which the writer of it has elsewhere delivered, and which he has so expressed that they appear to be the genuine feelings of his mind. You are here taught, for instance, that life is better than death : but you are instructed by Solomon, that the day of death is better than the day of one’s birthⁿ. You are here exhorted to eat, drink, and be merry : but the doctrine of the preacher is, that the house of mourning is to be preferred to that of feasting, and that the heart of fools is in the house of mirth^o. Here it is said, that death is the final boundary of man’s existence : but you are at one time solemnly assured by Solomon, that God will judge the actions of men ; and you find him repeatedly acknowledging, that such judgment does not take effect in the present life. Lastly, if further evidence be wanting, let the following be observed. Solomon declares, that the wickedness of man takes encouragement from the tardy proceedings of divine justice and the seeming inequalities of the divine

^l Div. Leg. b. v. §. 5. p. 183. note. ^m 1 Cor. xv. 32.

ⁿ Eccles. vii. 1.

^o Eccles. vii. 2, 4.

government. "Because sentence against an evil
 "work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart
 "of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."
 But he gives you to understand at the same time,
 that no man will, in the final issue of things, be borne
 out by such an encouragement. For immediately
 after saying this, he supposes the case of a sinner, who
 does evil an hundred times, and whose days are pro-
 longed: of this very character he declares, that it
 shall not be well with him, and that he *shall not*
 prolong his days, and that his days are as a shadow.
 What can be the meaning of this? His days *are* pro-
 longed, and yet his days *shall not be* prolonged. It
 can only mean, that though his days be many upon
 earth, yet, after this life is ended, the day of gladness
 shall never beam upon him again; he has had his
 portion in this world: and thus his days are only as
 a shadow, the common image by which scripture de-
 notes the fleeting condition of man's present state^p.
 But at the same time it is said, that it shall be well
 with them that fear God^q.

II. Among the citations of Warburton, there are
 others, which are not supposed to convey the autho-
 ritative language of the scriptural writer in whose
 book they occur, but only to furnish historical evi-
 dence of the sentiments of the speaker whose words
 they record. Of this nature are the words of the
 woman of Tekoah to king David: "For we must
 "needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground,
 "*which cannot be gathered up again*." Hence it
 is inferred, that the doctrine of a future state was

^p See Psal. cix. 23. cxliv. 4. Eccl. vi. 12. ^q Eccl. viii. 11, 12, 13,

^r 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

not the belief of the person who spoke these words : and from a number of such passages it is inferred, that it was not, generally speaking, the belief of the early Israelites.

With regard to these passages, it would have been hardly necessary, but for the undue stress which has been laid upon them, and the exaggerated importance with which they have been invested, to insist upon the following necessary principle of interpretation. It is the genius of every language upon earth, or, more correctly, of human speech itself, to abound in general declarations, which are subject to certain limitations and exceptions, but of which the proper limitations and exceptions, however necessary to be understood, are not expressed, because they are so familiar to the mind, that the specification would be needless^s. Let me give a familiar illustration. We will suppose that it was said of any indifferent person : " He is *no more*. He lately went to sea, the " vessel foundered, and every *soul* on board perished." Nobody would think of construing these colloquial phrases into a proof, that the person who employed them disbelieved the immortality of the soul. Yet, on the principles of Warburton, they would be taken to imply, that the total extinction of human existence was the sentiment of the speaker ; and the terms employed might be urged as a proof, that the extinction of the spiritual, as well as of the bodily, life, was emphatically denoted by them.

This applies to all languages whatever : but in regard to that of the holy scriptures in particular, fur-

^s For scriptural examples, see Matt. v. 34. John x. 8. Jam. v. 12.

ther and great allowances are still to be made. We are to remember, that the oriental style is peculiarly figurative; that some of the passages alleged occur in poetry, where the usual cast of oriental style rises into still higher degrees of bold and fervid imagery; and, lastly, that this poetry is in some instances of the lyrical kind, which, by reason of its sublime and imaginative character, will least of all endure the cold restraints of grammatical precision.

The fallacy of reasoning from the language of scripture, without due attention to these considerations, may be illustrated by a parallel case.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, has introduced king David addressing himself thus, in his dying speech, to his son. He speaks of death, according to a common figure, as *the way of all flesh*: to which he adds, “from which way it is no longer possible to return, and to know any thing that is done in life^t.” These words are as strong to the purpose, as any which Warburton has cited from scripture in proof of the position which we are now contesting. (My observation will of course be understood, in its proper limitation to that class of citations which I have last described, and with which alone I am at present concerned.) Reasoning therefore on the principles of this writer, I might infer, that the Jewish historian intended to describe David, as a person who did not believe the doctrine of a future state. Yet this inference would be manifestly false; since the same historian has in another part of his writings so expressed himself, as to make it evident, that a future

^t Εξ ἧς ουκεθ' οἶον τε επανελθοντα γινωαι τι κατα του βιον πραττεται.

Ant. Jud. VII. xv. 1.

state was, according to his view, the doctrine of Moses, and the general and ancient persuasion of his nation, as well as of himself^u.

The point for which we contend will be further evinced, by a reference to one of the passages which Warburton has himself adduced. The words are those of Hezekiah: "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth^x." These words are construed into a proof, first, that Hezekiah did not believe a future state; and, in an ulterior application of them, that a future state was not the popular belief of the Israelites in the age of the prophet Isaiah. What their real purport is, might perhaps be unfolded, with little difficulty, from an attentive view of the context^y. But with this I am not at present concerned, my purpose being, simply to shew that they do not warrant the

^u Τοις μεντοι γε κατα τους νομους παντα πραττουσι, το γερας εστιν ουκ αργυρος, ουδε χρυσος, ου μην ουδε κοτινω στεφανος, η σελινου, και τοιαυτη τις ανακηρυξις, αλλ' αυτος εκαστος αυτω το συνειδος εχων μαρτυρουν, πεπιστευκε' ΤΟΥ ΜΕΝ ΝΟΜΟΘΕΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΥΣΑΝΤΟΣ, ΤΟΥ ΔΕ ΘΕΟΥ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΙΣΧΥΡΑΝ ΠΑΡΕΣΧΗΚΟΤΟΣ, ότι τοις τους νομους διαφυλάξασι, καν, ει δεοι θνησκειν υπερ αυτων, προθυμως αποθανουσι, εδωκεν ο Θεος γενεσθαι τε παλιν, και βιον αμεινω λαβειν εκ περιτροπης. Ωκνουν δ' αν εγω νυν ταυτα γραφειν' ει μη δια των εργαων απασιν ην φανερον, ότι πολλοι και πολλοι ηδη των ημετερων, περι του μηδε ρημα φθεγξασθαι παρα τον νομον, παντα παθειν γενναίως προειλοντο. Contr. Ap. ii. 30.

^x Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 19.

^y "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, *in the land of the living*: I shall behold man no more *with the inhabitants of the world*." ver. 11. Here the qualification is expressed, which in the previous citation may well be supposed to be understood.

inference of Warburton. For this purpose I refer to another passage from the same prophet, which, in a manner of much more direct and obvious application, proves the direct contrary. The words relate to the destruction of the king of Babylon: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and shall say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" These words, as Dr. Graves has justly observed, afford a plain proof, "that the idea and the conviction of a future state were perfectly familiar to both the prophet and his readers^a." It is wholly unreasonable and unnatural to suppose, that such language could otherwise have been employed. If the Jewish people in the time of Isaiah had been, as Warburton contends, wholly strangers to this doctrine, it is hardly possible that the sacred writer should thus have introduced the mention of it in a manner which obviously indicates its previous reception and general prevalence^b.

Our work might be thought defective, if we did

^a Isaiah xiv. 9, 10.

^a Lectures on the Pentateuch.

^b The error of the Sadducees, in denying a future state, was generated by their ignorance and misconception of scripture. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures." It is rather remarkable, that the collection of texts, brought forward by bishop Warburton for the purpose of proving the disbelief of this doctrine among the Israelites, is almost precisely the same with that which was made by the Sadducees as their authority for a denial of its truth. This will be seen on a reference to the treatise of Menasseh on the Resurrection, lib. i. c. 7.

not, after offering the foregoing observations for the purpose of repelling the inference of Warburton, adduce direct evidence in support of the contrary proposition. It will therefore be incumbent on us to treat, in the next place, of the historical proof, which the scriptures afford, to that effect.

The passages which we shall quote, and the facts to which we shall refer, for that purpose, will be only such as may seem, in the estimation of candour, to be perfectly clear of dubious interpretation. Many others are commonly alleged. If we pass them over in silence, it is not because we wish to dispute their application; but because it seems desirable, that the strength of the argument should rest on those passages alone, of which the construction is least debatable.

But in order to a proper estimate of the value and amount of the evidence, which, in relation to this subject, the scriptures of the Old Testament actually supply; it will be proper to inquire in the first place, how much of such evidence we might, from a just regard to the circumstances under which those scriptures were composed, reasonably *expect* to find in them. We are to observe, that the reasoning of Warburton appeals, partly to the positive declarations of the sacred writers, and partly to their silence. The former argument we have already considered: the course of observation now leads us to offer a few words in exclusive relation to the latter. But first the argument itself shall be stated in the words of the author. "The sacred writings are extremely
"various in their subject, style, and composition.
"They contain an account of the creation and ori-

“gin of the human race; the history of a private family, of a chosen people, and of exemplary men and women. They consist of hymns and petitions to the Deity, precepts of civil life, and religious prophecies and predictions. Hence I infer, that as, amidst all this variety of writing, the doctrine of a future state never once appears to have had any share in this people’s thoughts; it never did indeed make part of their religious opinions^c.” Such is the argument; to which our objection is twofold. First, the statement which it contains is contrary to fact. Secondly, were the statement admitted, still the inference is fallacious. We will first consider the inference.

Let it then be remarked, that it is very unfair to argue, in the way of deducing the opinions of any person, or class of persons, merely from the want of evidence that they held the contrary opinions. Yet such is the nature of the argument before us: The Israelites did not believe a future state, because the Old Testament affords no evidence that they did.

There can be little reason to expect the introduction of an author’s opinions on a subject, of which he does not treat; or to calculate on his affording evidence in relation to a subject, on which he does not profess to give information. Let this be applied to the case before us. The question is, If the early Israelites entertained the belief of a future state in common, and in the same degree, with other nations, how do you account for the deficiency of historical evidence that they did? Admitting for the present

^c Book v. §. 5. p. 175.

this deficiency, (which however we admit only hypothetically,) the answer is : Because we are not to expect the narrative of scripture to deviate from its course, for the sake of giving information which is foreign to its object. That which Paley observes respecting the influence of religion in general, may fitly be applied to that particular motive of religion which is derived from the prospect of a future life. In regard to such a subject, the representations of history will necessarily be defective ; because the motive is most operative on those persons, and under those circumstances, of which history knows the least. History is chiefly employed on public and national transactions, and such transactions are commonly stimulated by temporal, not by future, motives ; whereas the influence of religion, and the contemplation of a future state, are secret and invisible^d. It does not appear that the history of the Israelites materially differs, as to this point, from the character of history in general.

But we are told, that this is not the case with the literary records of other nations among whom the belief of a future state is known to have existed : the history of the Saracens, for instance, and the poetry of the Suevi^e, are full of it. True : and why are they so ? Because it is peculiar to both these

^d Paley's Evidences, part iii. c.7.

^e I have used the term Suevi to denote, collectively, those various tribes of northern warriors among whom the religion of Odin prevailed, and who established their settlements in the southern provinces of Europe on the ruins of the Roman empire. This employment of the term is not indeed correct ; but I have adopted it, as having been employed in the same sense in that part of Warburton's work to which these observations relate.

nations, that the passion for conquest formed a leading feature of their character, and that the doctrine of a future state was the very motive, by which, according to their national institutions and religion, they were stimulated to encounter death in the conflicts of war. The frequent occurrence of that doctrine might therefore reasonably be expected in their literature: since war is the principal theme of every history, as it is also in the Runic poetry of the northern tribes. For the very same reason, it could not be reasonably expected in the literature of the Israelites. The difference of the two cases is very striking, and ought to be attentively remarked. The courage of armies is chiefly sustained, either by the contempt of death or the confidence of victory. The former of these sentiments will always be found to prevail in its greatest strength, when it is generated by the sure persuasion of immortal happiness in a future life^f. It was thus that the martial character was sustained both in the Arabs and the Suevi. Mahomet, the leader of the Arabs, inflamed the valour of his followers by promising the delights of a sensual paradise to such as should perish in battle. Of Odin, the lawgiver of the Suevi, the same is recorded: and, if both the person and the tradition be fabulous, the belief that he did so

^f “*Spes resurrectionis fastidium est mortis.*” Tert. ad Nat. I. 19.
The northern nations are thus described by Lucan:

“*Quos ille timorum*

“*Maximus haud urget, leti metus. Inde ruendi*

“*In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces*

“*Mortis: et ignavum REDITURÆ parcere VITÆ.*”

Pharsalia I. 459.

was nevertheless firmly entertained by his votaries. The paradise to which they aspired was called the Palace of the Slain; and none were admitted to its pleasures, but such as had fallen on the plain of carnage with their swords in their hands⁸. But with the Israelites the case was very different. They, indeed, like the nations with whom they are thus compared, went out in search of new possessions, which they were to win by the sword: but with them, after their settlement in the promised land, war was not, as it was with the Suevi and Arabs, a part of the national and permanent policy. For this reason, the motives of the warlike character would less frequently occur in their history. And with regard to these motives themselves, we are to observe, that the military courage of the people was not, in this instance, supported by the contempt of death, but by a motive which, had Moses been an impostor, he would not have thought of employing, namely, the confidence of victory. Such was one of the promises annexed to obedience: “It shall come “to pass,” says the lawgiver of Israel, “if thou shalt “hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord “thy God, to observe and to do all his command- “ments which I command thee this day, that the “Lord thy God will set thee on high above all “nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall “come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt “hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.” Among the blessings thus promised is contained the

⁸ See Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, and Bartholinus *de causis contemptæ mortis*.

following: "The Lord shall cause thine enemies that
 " rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face :
 " they shall come out against thee one way, and
 " flee before thee seven ways^g." Again : "The Lord
 " thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will
 " destroy these nations from before thee, and thou
 " shalt possess them. And the Lord shall give
 " them up before your face, that ye may do unto
 " them according unto all the commandments which
 " I have commanded you. *Be strong and of a good*
 " *courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them : for the*
 " *Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee ; he*
 " *will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*^h."

Let us however take indifferently the case of any other nation, respecting whom we have sufficient information to enable us to decide. That of the ancient Greeks will not be unsuitable. I would observe then : Had the Odyssey of Homer perished, how little evidence would his Iliad have supplied respecting the belief of that people in a future state ? The passages in that poem which afford an indication of such belief, are by no means more numerous in proportion, than the passages of the same character in the scriptures of the Old Testament. I am not the first, indeed, who has drawn a parallel on this subject from the poetry of Homer : and I am aware, that the great writer whose views I have presumed to controvert, has honoured the parallel with the name of " a ridiculous comparison." One reason for so designating it is, because the Old Testament is a religious history, but the poetry of Homer is not : we may

^g Deut. xxviii.

^h Deut. xxxi.

therefore expect a fuller account of religious motives in the former than in the latter. This very reason, I apprehend, goes to prove, that though a future state were fully and generally believed by the early Israelites, we have little reason to expect much mention of it in the Old Testament. For we have shewn, that that doctrine could not appear, in the form of explicit statement, in the legislative part of that book. We are therefore to look for it only in the historical: and here, we must expect to find it noticed, if at all, only incidentally, as occasions may arise in the course of the narrative of noticing its existence or operation. Now in this way of mention, which is the only way of probable occurrence, there must be less reason to expect it in the sacred history of the Israelites, than in any other history whatever: because this history relates to us the affairs of a people, whose law proposed to them a peculiar sanction, relating to the present, and not to a future, life. As this sanction would often constitute the motive of those actions which their history records, the motive of a future state would for that very reason occur to our notice the less frequently: since the motive of a future life is most energetic, and its effects are most visible, at those times, when the motives belonging to our present state are too weak to sustain the rectitude of our conduct.

Thus much it has been necessary to observe, in reply to the inference deduced by Warburton from the alleged silence of the Old Testament. But it will be remembered, that we not only object to the reasoning on the supposition that the assumption is true, but we also deny the truth of the assumption

itself. In support of that denial we appeal to the evidence which we are about to offer.

“The Israelites,” says Warburton, “from the time of Moses to the time of their captivity, had not the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment.” In proof of the contrary, I refer, in the first place, to the history of Saul, who desired to consult the prophet Samuel after his death. I have nothing to do with the disputes which have been maintained respecting other parts of that remarkable narrative, but only insist upon one point, which, I believe, never was, nor can be, disputed. I say then, in the words of bishop Bull, that “this history undeniably proves, that Saul believed that the soul of Samuel was still in being, and alive, after his body was dead and laid in the graveⁱ.” Surely we must admit, that, in this instance, personality entered into the idea entertained by Saul of the survivorship of the soul. If, according to the notion of Warburton, he had thought that the spirit of Samuel was now reunited to its parent substance, he could not have wished to converse with it: he could not have desired, that it should be again restored to its distinct existence for the purpose of communication with him. If the personality be granted, as a part of the belief of Saul, then, on the principles of Warburton himself, Saul must also have believed in future rewards and punishments: since the great writer himself has told us, that the idea of personality is “only annexed to the *rewards and punishments* of a future state.” Again, if such were his belief, it cannot reasonably

ⁱ Serm. viii.

be supposed, that it was not also the general belief of his age and country : for the sacred historian says nothing which may lead us to suppose, that Saul was singular in his notions ; and yet, if that singularity had existed, it was certainly too remarkable to admit the supposition of its being passed over in silence. After what has now been said, it may justly occasion some surprise, when we find this incident regarded by Warburton as proving, not the *immortality of the soul* considered in a religious sense, but its *separate existence*, considered physically¹!

My next proof shall be derived from the Law itself ; and the statement of it shall be partly given in the words of Warburton himself. “ From the very “ laws of Moses himself,” says he, “ we have an internal evidence of his knowledge of this doctrine. “ Amongst the laws against Gentile divinations, “ there is one directed against that species of them, “ called by the Greeks necromancy, or invocation of “ the dead^k ; *which necessarily implies, in the law-giver who forbids it, as well as in the offender “ who uses it, the knowledge of a future state*¹.” And must not such a law, which evinces the knowledge of a future state in the lawgiver, suppose the same knowledge to have existed in those to whom it was given ? Or, if it be said, that the Israelites had not yet, at the delivery of this law, parted with their belief in this doctrine, (for it is confessed that they had that doctrine before the time of Moses,) would they not have thus gained the knowledge of

ⁱ Div. Leg. b. vi. Note [LL] at the end of vol. v.

^k Deut. xviii. 10, 11.

¹ Div. Leg. App. to b. v. p. 205.

it? A law which forbids men to consult the spirits of the dead, conveys an obvious recognition of both the existence, and the personality, of those spirits. Let it be observed, that there is no distinguishing in this case between the separate existence of the soul, and its future rewards and punishments: for it is of the latter doctrine that the great writer is here speaking.

I will now adduce a third instance. The words which I shall quote are not indeed those of an Israelite: but they occur in the Pentateuch as the words of a prophet; and the sacred text seems to intimate^m, that they were spoken by the immediate direction of God. When Balaam, after repeated and urgent solicitations, declares his determination not to disobey the command of God, he thus explains the motive of his conduct: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hisⁿ." It is plain, then, that Balaam's inclination to disobey was restrained by the prospect of death. On this fact, and on these words, it is hardly necessary to offer any other comment than that which is supplied by Warburton himself. "How should a picture of this scene
"allure men to virtue, or deter them from vice, but
"as it opens to them a view of those rewards and
"punishments they are just going to receive?" We must indeed be truly at a loss to conceive what other construction could be put upon it; and equally at a loss to explain how a people, who found a passage like this in their national code, could be igno-

^m Num. xxii. 38. and xxiii. 5. 12.

ⁿ Ibid. ver. 10.

^o Div. Leg. Note [C] at the end of b. ii. p. 353. vol. i.

rant of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

Judging it unnecessary to proceed further with this discussion, I will conclude with briefly summing up the evidence which has been adduced. That the survival of the soul was believed by the early Israelites, is a necessary deduction from a variety of scriptural passages. But it is contended, that a belief in the survival of the soul does not include a belief in its personality. We reply, that some, at least, of the above passages are such as plainly to convey the notion of distinct personality, as well as that of survivorship. Such is that which records the interview of Saul with the witch of Endor; and that which describes the salutation of the Babylonian king by the spirits of the mighty dead, on his first entrance into the abode of separated souls. These passages, I say, convey the plainest notion of personality; since nothing can do so more fully, than the actions of rising from a seat, of speaking, conversing, and of being consulted. If now it be admitted, that the personality of the surviving soul was believed by the Israelites, then, according to Warburton, the doctrine of rewards and punishments must necessarily have been so likewise: since he tells us, that the idea of personality subsisted only in union with that of rewards and punishments^p. But, not to content ourselves with a personal argument, we contend, on more general principles, that if the ideas of survivorship and of personality be admitted to have entered into the belief, entertained by the Israelites respecting the future

^p See the extract, pp. 265, 266. of this work.

destiny of the soul; then the doctrine of rewards and punishments must also have formed a part of that belief. For it is impossible to entertain the notion, of an apathy so great and so repugnant to the common sentiments of human nature, as that which is involved in the belief of an eternal existence, unattended with any solicitude respecting the happiness or misery of that existence: and it is equally impossible, in the case of a people so well instructed as the Israelites were in relation to the moral attributes of their Creator, that they should have entertained the notion of happiness or misery in connexion with the prospect of a future life, and yet not have believed, that such happiness and misery would be determined by the righteous judgment of God upon the actions of men.

One remark we deem it proper to add, in regard to numerous other passages in the sacred volume, which are commonly insisted on, as affording evidence and illustration of the popular faith of the Israelites in regard to a future state, but which have not been quoted in our discourse upon the subject. They have been omitted, chiefly because it was our wish to appeal to no passages but such as afford, not merely a natural and probable, but also a necessary, inference, to the effect of supporting our own views: and also, because it seemed most desirable to limit ourselves to those, which least called for prolixity of discussion and controversy in proof of their application. Many of these passages are however greatly available for the general purpose of proving, that the scriptures are by no means so silent on the sub-

ject as they have been said to be. The following may serve for an example: "As for man, his days
"are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is
"gone; and the place thereof shall know it no
"more. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,*
"and his righteousness unto children's children; to
"such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them^q." Many other passages of similar complexion might here be introduced; but the foregoing will suffice for our purpose. On such passages we have declined to insist, as affording in themselves decisive proof of the belief in a future state. But having deduced the evidence of that belief from other considerations, we feel at least entitled to contend, that the prospect of a future state must have had the fullest influence on the minds of those, by whom such language was employed: if, therefore, such passages do not unequivocally declare the doctrine, they must at least be construed agreeably to the belief of it. It is here, for instance, declared, that "the mercy of the
"Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them
"that fear him." Can a declaration like this have dropped from a person believing a future state, if his soul had not at the time been filled with the most ravishing thoughts of future and eternal bliss? The improbability of such a notion will appear more forcibly, if we reflect, that the sacred writer had just before declared, that "the mercy of God toward

^q Psalm ciii. 15—18.

“ them that fear him is great, as the heaven is high
“ above the earth; and that he hath removed our
“ transgressions from us, as far as the east is from
“ the west.” If the doctrine of a future state was
believed by the writer of this psalm, there must be
some allusion to it here: for the sacred penman of
it must assuredly have known, that death was the
doom incurred by man’s transgression. The same
reasoning might be pursued in reference to a great
multitude of similar passages: if a future state was
believed by the speakers or writers from whom
those passages are derived, it is wholly unnatural
to suppose, that it was not the subject of their
contemplation at the time when they so expressed
themselves. Such passages, therefore, though we
should allow that they avail not to prove and as-
certain the belief of the Israelites; must yet, on the
supposition of that belief being entertained, be ad-
mitted, by reason of their frequency, wholly to an-
nul the argument, which is framed on the ground of
the alleged silence of the sacred writers. So far
then shall we be, on a true view of the case, from
admitting, with Warburton, that “ the doctrine of a
“ future state never once appears to have had *any*
“ *share* in this people’s thoughts^r ;” that we should
argue with more probability, from the foregoing and
many similar passages, that it must have been *up-*
permost in their thoughts. More than this we can-
not reasonably expect: since it is quite unnatural,
unless when people’s opinions are called in question,
that they should declare themselves on such a sub-

^r Div. Leg. b. v. §. 5. p. 176. vol. v

ject with the studied precision of confessions and articles of faith: and least of all is such precision to be expected, when the language employed is that of impassioned exclamation and devotional poetry.

THE result of this investigation will be the more satisfactory, if there shall appear a perfect agreement between the doctrine of our church, and that which we have endeavoured to establish on the authority of the Divine word. In order to illustrate their concurrence, we appeal to the following authentic declaration.

“Article VII. Of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind BY CHRIST, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore *they are not to be heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises.*”

Nothing could more exactly harmonize with those great principles which it has throughout been our desire to enforce. Both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind: but it is offered only *by Christ*, or *through Christ*; for that is the proper import of the passage^s. So far as Christ is made known to the world, eternal life is also made known. While the Redeemer is discerned only through a mysterious veil, the doctrine of eternal life is wrapped in similar obscurity. When the mystery is partly cleared up, then eternal life is

^s “*Per Christum.*” Latin Articles.

holden out to mankind with a proportioned increase in the clearness of the prospect. At last, the Son of God is manifested in the flesh, and pays the appointed ransom for the souls of men: then life and immortality are fully brought to light by the gospel; and the gospel is the doctrine of the cross. Throughout the whole succession of detached revelations, the discoveries on these two subjects keep pace with, and are justly proportioned to, each other. They subsist nowhere in a state of separation.

To the same tenour is the language of our church in one of her homilies. “Although” the holy men who lived before the coming of Christ “were not “named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith “that they had; *for they looked for all the benefits “of God the Father, through the merits of his Son “Jesus Christ, as we now do.* This difference is “between them and us; for *they looked when “Christ should come, and we be in the time when “he is come.* Therefore, saith saint Augustine, the “time is altered and changed, but not the *faith*†.”

“Wherefore they are not to be heard, which “*feign* that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises.” This, to an ordinary mind, would appear totally inconsistent with the notion, that the doctrine of a future state was unknown to the Israelites from the time of Moses to that of the Captivity. Our attention is therefore due to the method, by which the consistency of the two doctrines is vindicated by Warburton. This is done by construing the word “Fathers” as an emphatical

† The second part of the sermon of Faith.

term, designed to signify exclusively “the fathers and “ leaders of the Jewish nation ”,” (such for instance as Abraham, the father of the faithful,) as distinguished from the *bulk* of the people. We must be excused, if we regard this as nothing better than a wretched quibble, wholly unworthy of the great genius by whom it is employed. The word thus expounded cannot reasonably be understood in this place, as having any other meaning than that which is affixed to it, when familiarly employed to designate persons who lived at a remote and ancient period. If proof of this be wanting, we have only to refer to the Latin version of the Articles, which is equally authentic with the English. Here it will be found, that the very emphatical word, insisted upon as a key to the right interpretation of the church, is nothing more than a mere expletive, introduced only, because the genius of our language does not, in this instance, like the Latin, admit the employment of an adjective in a substantive form; for it is not even to be found in the text of the Article: “*Quare male sentiunt, qui VETERES tantum “ in promissiones temporarias sperasse confingunt.*”

ⁿ Div. Leg. b. vi. §. 5. pp. 1, 2, 3. vol. vi.

CHAPTER VII.

OTHER REMARKABLE INSTANCES OF OMISSION IN THE MO-SAIC CODE, EXPLAINED ON THE PRINCIPLE WHICH HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THE OMISSION OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE.

THERE are many points in the Christian dispensation, in which, with regard to the fulness of its discoveries and the greatness of its encouragements, we recognise the most unequivocal marks of superiority over the Mosaical economy. Of this character are three of its distinguishing doctrines: namely, the doctrines of a future state, of prayer, and of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

The former of these doctrines has been considered at large: and we have endeavoured, we trust satisfactorily, to account for the different lights in which it is placed under the two covenants. As the hopes of man relating to this doctrine have not, according to the will of God, any other foundation than the atonement of Christ: so has it been our design to prove, that derangement and disadvantage would necessarily have been occasioned to the plan of revealed religion, if eternal life had been openly promised under the Mosaic law; or if it had in any way whatever been promised, without a manifest reference to the sacrifice by which it was purchased for mankind. At the same time, we have argued, that, notwithstanding the absence of direct assurances in the writings of their legislator, the doctrine of a future state was fully entertained and believed by the

Israelitish nation during every period of their history.

We will now, in like manner, advert to the two remaining doctrines of those which we have specified. On entering upon this subject, a feeling of surprise may justly be indulged, when we find, that the omission of a future state in the Pentateuch should have furnished the occasion of so much discussion and controversy; while the silence of that institute with regard to the subjects of prayer and sanctification, (belonging, as those subjects do, to the vital essence of religion, and indispensably necessary, as they are, to the circumstances of a dependent and fallen creature,) should have been passed over with an almost total inadvertency. These latter doctrines, as we shall endeavour to make appear, stand upon precisely the same footing, in the system of revealed religion, with the former. The silence of the Pentateuch respecting them can be explained, only by contemplating the relation in which they stand to the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation for the sins of the world.

I. We will consider the doctrine of prayer. It will readily be acknowledged, that prayer is the very essence of all religious worship: so much so, that we can scarcely form a notion of religion, in which that duty is not included. Is it not then truly remarkable, that in a code professedly religious, in the earliest code of religion, and in the only code of true religion which for many ages was extant in the world; so very little should be said on the subject of prayer?

It has been asserted, that prayer is nowhere en-

joined to the children of Israel under the Law^x. This however is not strictly correct. At the end of the tithing every three years, the people were commanded to offer up prayer to God according to the following solemn form of adoration: “ I have
“ brought away the hallowed things out of mine
“ house, and also have given them unto the Levite,
“ and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to
“ the widow, according to all thy commandments
“ which thou hast commanded me: I have not
“ transgressed thy commandments, neither have I
“ forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my
“ mourning, neither have I taken away ought there-
“ of for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for
“ the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the
“ Lord my God, and have done according to all that
“ thou hast commanded me. *Look down from thy
“ holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people
“ Israel, and the land which thou hast given us,
“ as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that
“ floweth with milk and honey*.” This, I believe,

^x This position is by bishop Bull ascribed to Episcopus. The words of Bull are, “ Ut in manifesto fuisse errore videatur doctis-
“ simus Episcopus, cum dicat, nuspiam et nunquam in Lege
“ præcationem populo præscriptam legi.” Harm. Ap. Diss. Post. c. x. §. 5. The language of Episcopus in the passage referred to, does not however appear exactly to warrant the construction thus put upon it. It is as follows: “ Nuspiam in lege Divina
“ aperte præcipitur *omnibus ac singulis* oratio.” And again; “ Nobis hic sufficit indicasse, nullum singulare ea de re præcep-
“ tum expresse datum reperiri, quod quidem inter illa 613. [præ-
“ cepta a Rabbiniis enumerata] recenseri meretur.” Inst. Theol. lib. iii. sec. 2. cap. 1.

^y Deut. xxvi. 13, 14, 15.

is the only instance which the Law supplies, in which prayer can be regarded as a subject of general and extended obligation.

So also at the expiation of an uncertain murder, the elders of the city, next adjoining to the place in which a man is found dead, are instructed to pray after this manner: "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. *Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge*."

To these instances of prescribed prayer some would add, as a third, the form of words in which Aaron and his sons were required to bless the people: "*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace*."

The foregoing are, I believe, all the instances contained in the Pentateuch, in which prayer is distinctly enjoined as a matter of obligation. The following circumstances, in connexion with these instances, are truly deserving of remark.

The first case which we have cited furnishes a precept, of which the observance could not be more frequent than once in three years; which could apply to the males only, since they only had tithes to present; and which could not even apply to the whole of the male population, since the Levites and others were not burdened with the charge of this triennial tithing, but maintained out of it. The second instance introduces a precept relating to a con-

^z Deut. xxi, 7, 8.

^a Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26.

tingent occasion, which probably might never occur to many individuals during the whole course of their lives. The remaining instance applies only to the sacerdotal office.

But whatever stress may be laid upon the fore-mentioned instances; you cannot extract from the Pentateuch any injunction of prayer, applicable to both persons and times, in that extensive mode of obligation, which is suitable to the condition of every rational and dependent creature in order to obtain from God the supply of his daily and continual wants.

And, even though such precept could be alleged, it would further be impossible, to adduce from the Pentateuch any declaration of a blessing annexed to the duty of prayer, generally considered, or any general promise that prayer would be heard and granted. This is most essential in its application to the present subject, and perhaps still more remarkable than the omission of the precept itself.

This last observation applies to prayer in general. Had it been made with regard to particular cases, its truth might have been disputed. It might have been objected, that the prayer of which the use is directed in the case of the uncertain murder, is followed by these words: "And the blood shall be forgiven them ^b." And it might also be urged, that the Aaronical form of blessing is followed by these words: "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them ^c."

But even in this limited application, the objection

^b Deut. xxi. 8.

^c Num. vi. 27.

cannot be maintained. For with regard to the former of the two cases, the words referred to cannot justly be regarded as a blessing specially annexed to prayer, or as a promise that the appointed prayer, considered in itself, and detached from its concomitant ceremonies, would be granted. That prayer is only a part of a ceremony circumstantially described; and the words referred to contain nothing more than the ordinary assurance, annexed in numerous instances of the Mosaic ritual, when the sacramental efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices and expiations is declared. No less than eight examples of this occur in the fourth and fifth chapters of Leviticus where no prayer is prescribed^d. The forgiveness which is promised cannot, therefore, be considered as a blessing specifically annexed to the prayer which is offered: that prayer being only the part of a ceremony which had been previously described, and which concludes after the manner of other ceremonial ordinances which were appointed as the means of remission. Thus much will suffice with regard to the former of these two cases. As to the words which follow after reciting the form of benediction, they appear to be declaratory of nothing further than the efficacy of the sacerdotal benediction of Aaron, considered as the mediator of temporal blessings.

The two following propositions then will remain incontrovertible: first, That the Mosaic writings contain no general injunction of prayer, applicable to all persons and times: secondly, That those writings contain no promise, relating to prayer in general,

^d Levit. iv. 20. 26. 31. 35. v. 10. 13. 16. 18.

that it would be granted by God. This is all that is necessary to the line of argument we are pursuing.

Having sufficiently noticed the omission of the Mosaic Law in regard to the article of prayer; it is time that we should advert to the injunctions, declarations, and promises, of the Gospel, relating to the same subject.

“ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him^e?”

“ If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them^f.”

“ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him^g?”

“ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you^h.”

^e Matt. vii. 7—11.

^f Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

^g Luke xi. 13.

^h John xv. 7.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye
 “ shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give
 “ it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my
 “ name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy
 “ may be full. These things have I spoken unto you
 “ in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall
 “ no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall
 “ shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye
 “ shall ask *in my name*: and I say not unto you,
 “ that I will pray the Father for you: for the Fa-
 “ ther himself loveth you, because ye have loved
 “ me, and have believed that I came out from
 “ Godⁱ.”

“ Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then
 “ have we confidence towards God. And whatso-
 “ ever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep
 “ his commandments, and do those things that are
 “ pleasing in his sight^k.”

“ This is the confidence that we have in him,
 “ that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he
 “ heareth us: and if we know that he hear us,
 “ whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the
 “ petitions that we desired of him^l.”

These citations are made for the purpose of illustrating, by contrast, the striking difference between the two covenants with regard to this important and vital doctrine. And what inference shall we draw from it? Because the Mosaic writings are thus silent on the subject of prayer, shall we therefore infer, that neither prayer was offered, nor any belief

ⁱ John xvi. 23—27.

^l 1 John iii. 21, 22.

^k 1 John v. 14, 15.

of its efficacy entertained, by the subjects of that ritual? This consequence must unavoidably follow, if we subscribe to the parallel reasoning which has been employed by Warburton on another subject. "One might fairly conclude," says he, "that *the people's not having* this doctrine, was *a necessary consequence of Moses's not teaching it*, in a law which forbids the least addition to the written institute^m." These words are applied by that writer to the doctrine of a future state. Let the doctrine of prayer however be substituted in its place: for that doctrine stands in the Mosaic ritual on the very same footing with the other. Then the argument will be equally just in its application, with regard to both the doctrines: and the conclusion arising from it will be, that neither prayer was observed, nor any belief of its efficacy entertained, by the Israelites, for many ages after the giving of the Law! A position so manifestly false, that any attempt to disprove it by an induction of particulars, would be little less than an insult to the understanding of the person to whom such a process of reasoning might be addressed.

The following words exhibit the same argument in nearly the same form: "I go on to shew, that future rewards and punishments, which COULD NOT BE THE SANCTION of the Mosaic dispensation, WERE NOT TAUGHT in it at all: and that, in consequence of this omission, the PEOPLE had not the doctrine of a future state for many agesⁿ."

^m Div. Leg. b. v. §. 5. vol. v. p. 174.

ⁿ Ibid. b. v. §. 5. vol. v. p. 158.

Is it not plain, that what is thus observed respecting a future state, must equally apply to prayer? And does it not, if so applied, lead to a flagrant absurdity? Hence then we contend, that its fallacy, as applied to the former subject, must be equally manifest.

The omission of this subject in the Pentateuch can admit no other reasonable explanation than the following. The law which Moses gave contained not in itself any thing, which could render prayer acceptable to God or effectual for the benefit of the worshipper. This could be accomplished only through the atonement of Christ. No man cometh unto the Father but by him. The promise is to those who shall ask in his name. We are to draw near in full assurance of faith, and to come boldly unto the throne of grace, because we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens^o. It would therefore have been premature, if this great distinction of the Gospel had been anticipated in the Mosaic dispensation. For it could never have been the *sanction* of that law: and if it had been introduced in any other form, it would naturally have been regarded as a sanction. Thus would it have thrown a shade over the riches, the splendour, and the beauty, of the Gospel: since these are most conspicuous, when seen in contrast with the imperfections attendant on all the former stages in the progressive advancement of revelation.

The observance of prayer as a religious exercise is manifestly supposed and recognised in the Penta-

^o Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

teuch; as must appear from the instances to which we have already adverted, and also from a variety of facts which occur to us in the narrative of that book. But still we find not in the writings of Moses any precept, declaratory of its general obligation; nor any promise, that it should be offered with effect to the worshipper.

II. Our attention will in the next place be due to the doctrine of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. In the consideration of this subject also, we shall endeavour to shew, that the principles already applied to the doctrines of a future state and of prayer, are similarly applicable, for the purpose of explaining the difference which exists between the old and new covenants, with regard to this doctrine also.

The promise of the Holy Spirit, as an active power of sanctification in the heart of man, formed no part of the Law. This will appear, first, from an inspection of the Mosaic writings, in which that promise is not to be found. It will also appear from a reference to the prophet Jeremiah. The writings of that prophet predict the introduction of a *new* covenant in terms, which, according to the general opinion of Christian divines, can be applied only to the dispensation of the Gospel. He declares, that this covenant was to be different from the covenant, which God made with the forefathers of his nation when he brought them up out of the land of Egypt. He proceeds to specify the points in which the difference would consist. Among these particulars the first is stated in these words: "I
" will put my law in their inward parts, and write

“ it in their hearts ^r.” These words are plainly descriptive of those sanctifying graces, which, according to the terms of the evangelical covenant, the faithful were to derive from God’s holy Spirit. This being stated, as a point of distinction between the Old and New covenants ; it is plain that the promise of which we speak could not belong to the former.

The promise of a sanctifying Spirit belongs then to the Gospel : it did not belong to the Law.

Shall we then say, that the sanctifying graces of God’s Spirit were altogether withholden from all who lived under the Mosaic covenant ? Certainly not : because, had this been the case, we should not have read, as we now do, of holy men, living under that Law, whose faith and piety were acceptable to God. To assert, with regard to these characters, that the principle of sanctification was, or could be, derived from any other source than the Spirit of God ; can never be maintained by any but a Pelagian. The true state of the case is explained with admirable clearness and brevity by bishop Bull : “ The Spirit of God was given *under* the Law, but “ not *by virtue of* the Law ^s.” This divine aid was not a covenanted mercy belonging to the law of Moses, but a benefit derived to the subjects of that law, as other benefits also were, independently of any provisions which the Law contained.

It must moreover appear, that the doctrine of sanctification was not unknown to the Israelites, and that God himself is spoken of, in the writings of

^r Jer. xxxi. 33.

^s “ Sub lege quidem, at non ex lege.” Harm. Apost. Diss. II. c. xi. §. 4.

Moses, as the author of sanctification in man. The necessity of sanctification is plainly set forth, when the circumcision of the heart is required^t: and the nature of it is explained by the practical effects, with a view to which that spiritual circumcision is required. These practical effects are denoted by “fearing the Lord their God, by walking in his ways, “by loving and serving him with all their heart “and with all their soul, by keeping the commandments of the Lord and his statutes^u.” And the work of sanctification is plainly attributed to God as its author. Such is the tenour of the following passages: “I am the Lord that doth sanctify you^x.” “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: “for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep “my statutes and do them. I am the Lord which “sanctify you^y.” Let it not be said, that the sanctity here spoken of is merely ceremonial, in distinction from legal defilement: it is no other than that sanctity which consists in an impartial observance of all the commandments of God, moral as well as ritual; of those which govern the heart, as well as those which regulate the outward actions. This will be plainly seen from those descriptions of it, which are further conveyed in the following passages: “That ye may remember, and do *all* my “commandments, and be holy unto your God^z.” “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine

^t Deut. x. 16.

^u Ibid. x. 12, 13. These verses relate to the same subject with that last referred to.

^x Exodus xxxi. 13.

^y Levit. xx. 7, 8.

^z Numb. xv. 40.

“ heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord
 “ thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy
 “ soul ^a.” Lastly, it appears, that the obligation of
 holiness was grounded on the duty of imitating the
 divine perfections: the pattern, thus proposed to
 them, plainly conveying the notion of a spiritual,
 and not merely an external and ceremonial, sanc-
 tity. “ Ye shall be holy,” says God to his people;
 “ for I am holy ^b.” Why then was not the promise
 of this blessing annexed to the Mosaic covenant?
 Plainly because that covenant contained in itself no
 efficacy towards the attainment of it, and because
 the blessing itself flows only from the atonement
 and intercession of Christ. “ I will pray the Fa-
 “ ther,” says our Lord, “ and he shall give you
 “ another Comforter ^c.” “ It is expedient for you
 “ that I go away: for if I go not away, the Com-
 “ forter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I
 “ will send him unto you ^d.”

^a Deut. xxx. 6.

^b Levit. xi. 44, 45. The concurrence of various authorities, extremely different in character, sanctions the view which is here taken. Thus Maimonides gives the Rabbinical exposition of the last cited passage: “ *Supremus etenim gradus hominis est, ut quam maxime fieri potest, Deo similis evadat, ita scilicet, ut accomodemus vel conformemus opera nostra ad opera illius, quemadmodum sapientes nostri explicarunt in expositione ver- sus illius, Sancti estote, quemadmodum ego sanctus sum.*” More Nevochim, pars i. c. 54. p. 90. ed. Basil. 1629. See also Spencer de Legg. lib. i. c. 7. §. 2. vol. i. p. 123. To these add the decisive authority of St. Peter: “ As he which hath called you is holy, “ so be ye *holy in all manner of conversation*; because it is writ- “ ten, *Be ye holy; for I am holy.*” 1 Epist. i. 15, 16.

^c John xiv. 16.

^d John xvi. 7.

Thus ought the three doctrines, of eternal life, of prayer, and of sanctification; to be viewed in the same light, as so many striking marks of distinction between the old and new covenants. The benefits which these doctrines hold forth to mankind were enjoyed; and the doctrines themselves were, in a limited and qualified manner, entertained; under the Law. But these benefits are no where explicitly promised in that institute; because such promises belong exclusively, in their own nature, to the evangelical covenant, and stand upon no other foundation than the sacrifice of Christ. The principle thus laid down will derive both strength and illustration from an attentive regard to the following passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews; where, speaking of the benefits derived from the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, the apostle thus expresses himself.

“ But now hath he obtained a more excellent
 “ ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of
 “ a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon
 “ BETTER PROMISES. For if that first covenant had
 “ been faultless, then should no place have been
 “ sought for the second. For finding fault with
 “ them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the
 “ Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the
 “ house of Israel and with the house of Judah: *Not*
 “ *according to the covenant that I made with their*
 “ *fathers in the day when I took them by the hand*
 “ *to lead them out of the land of Egypt*; because
 “ they continued not in my covenant, and I re-
 “ garded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the
 “ covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
 “ after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my

“ laws into their mind, and write them in their
 “ hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they
 “ shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach
 “ every man his neighbour, and every man his bro-
 “ ther, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know
 “ me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be
 “ merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins
 “ and their iniquities will I remember no more ^e.”

We will conclude our view of this subject with the following remark. It will not be denied, that, agreeably to the concurrent descriptions of both prophets and evangelists, the coming of the Messiah was to be accompanied by an abundant and illustrious manifestation of the glory of God. “ The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together ^f.” This is the language of Isaiah, when predicting that event. “ I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former ^g.” These are the words of a later prophet, with regard to the second temple: which, though in the visible splendor and magnificence of its structure inferior to the former, was to be honoured by the personal presence of God manifested in the flesh. “ Glory to God in the highest,” was a part of the song of the heavenly choir who proclaimed the advent of the Redeemer. We would ask, then, in what was this glory to consist? It was not to be seen in the display of worldly greatness

^e Heb. viii. 6—12. Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

^f Is. xl. 5. ^g Haggai ii. 7. 9.

and majesty, in the trophies of earthly warfare or the ensigns of temporal dominion. Doubtless we can understand by it nothing else, than the glory of God reconciling the world to himself by the death of his Son, and dispensing his mercies to a fallen race through the means of that precious expiation. Of these mercies, eternal life is the end and the completion: the promise annexed to prayer, and that of the sanctifying Spirit, are instrumentally necessary, in order to the attainment of that blessed consummation. All these blessings belong strictly and exclusively to the evangelical covenant. Here they are covenanted mercies. But they could not, consistently with the truth of the Christian scheme, belong to any other covenant. Had they been attached to any foregoing dispensation, how could the glory of God have been eminently manifested in the Gospel? How could the prophetic declarations on this subject have been verified? Standing as they do, connected with the person and the dignity of the Lamb of God, they shew forth the holy attributes of the Deity in a blaze of glory almost too bright for the mental eye to endure. Suppose the contrary had been the case: would not the carnal mind then exult with insolence, if, when called upon to shew the manifestation of God's glory in the person of Christ, we had nothing further to allege, than the outward circumstances of abject humiliation which were attendant upon the man of sorrows, together with the bloody and ignominious cross, which was a stumblingblock to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness? How is the case altered, when we are able to point to that cross as a fountain

opened to a polluted world for sin and uncleanness ; and to the blood which pours down it, as the means provided by God of conveying his most inestimable mercies to mankind, in the acceptance of their prayers, the sanctification of their souls, and the free gift of eternal life ? Surely, in this view, Christ crucified may justly be regarded as the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to them that believe : but this could never have been so manifest, if the promises of which we are speaking had existed in connexion with any former covenant or dispensation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HARMONY OF DIVINE REVELATION INSISTED ON AS AN
EVIDENCE OF ITS TRUTH.

Ὅρῳ ἐστὶ πῶς φίλα καὶ συμφῶνα ἐλάλησαν πάντες οἱ προφῆται, ἘΝΙ
ΚΑΙ Τῷ ΑΥΤῷ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ ΕΚΦΩΝΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ. Theoph. ad Au-
tolyicum, II. 35.

WE have now terminated our inquiry into the subject originally proposed. But we should be culpably wanting in our endeavours, however humble, to do justice to that subject, if we failed to notice some important consequences resulting from the past examination. These consequences are adapted, partly to corroborate the general evidence of revealed religion; and partly to break the force of objections which are advanced against it.

If we take a general view of all those several communications of the Divine will which are recorded in the sacred volume, we cannot fail to recognise a character of harmonious consistency pervading the various dispensations and successive epochs of revealed religion. In that unity of design and concurrent tendency which characterise these several dispensations; we discover the strongest evidence to prove the *Unity* of their Author. At the same time, the wonderful display which shines throughout them, of transcendent wisdom, holiness, foreknowledge, providential arrangement, benevolence, justice, and mercy; together with the stupendous union of attributes, apparently irreconcilable, but which are here exhibited as acting in

concert for the good of mankind: this display, we contend, powerfully evinces the *Divinity* of that Author.

“ It is one argument amongst many,” says an excellent divine, “ of the divinity of the holy Scriptures, that these seemingly unconnected parts do all yet unite in one great plan. Scattered like the stars in the firmament of heaven, like them too they are the parts of an harmonious system. The designs of the Almighty are distinguished from those of man, by being of an extent far beyond all the powers of human execution. The work of revelation, taking its rise in the beginning of things, advanced slowly through many ages towards its accomplishment. Many were the agents commissioned by heaven to labour in the progress of this great work. And while each seemed to study only his own times, and to be intent only on the execution of his own particular part, he was working on the vast design of Heaven, in concert with those who had lived many ages before him, and with those who were to arise in ages yet to come. Nothing, therefore, could give consistency to the labours of men thus situated in times and countries the most remote from each other, and amongst whom no human means of communication could possibly lie open, but the guiding hand of Him who ‘ knows the end from the beginning,’ and before whom the secrets of all future ages are unfolded, conducting the whole, and leading each, unknown to himself, to fill up his part of the immense plan ^h.”

^h Rotheram's Essay on Faith, sect. 1.

The general principle, thus unfolded with such remarkable propriety of thought and elegance of language, will be clearly illustrated and powerfully confirmed by an examination of certain striking particulars connected with the scheme of divine revelation.

Consider then the remote distance from each other of those great events, which, during the vast interval between the fall of man and his redemption, concur together in harmonious and progressive movements, towards the accomplishment of one great design. Consider also the distance from each other, of the many prophets and inspired teachers, whom God, in various ages, selected for the declaration of his will, with regard to that design itself, the intermediate events, and the subordinate provisions, which related to it. At one distinguished epoch in the progress of the scheme, the lawgiver of Israel appears as a chosen instrument in God's hand, of conducting a measure of the greatest importance towards the success of the general plan. This great prophet announces the commencement of the plan to have taken place about two thousand four hundred years before he was born, and the plan itself was to have its completion about fifteen hundred years after he was dead. He records, in the blessings delivered to the patriarchs, and by them to their children, several declarations relating to the ultimate purpose of divine mercy, which were subsequent to the first opening of the plan, and concurrent both with that and with its final completion; but which, as they were communicated before he was born, he never could have learned from personal

knowledge. In agreement with these preceding declarations, a long succession of prophets, each in his respective time and station, acting in unison without the possibility of acting in concert, fulfil the parts allotted to them under the direction of God: each instrumental in arranging the intermediate stages of the progressive scheme; each affording to his contemporaries a prospective view of the intended mercy; each describing the future redemption (with unequal measures of discovery, indeed, but) in characters consistent both with those who went before and those who followed him; each contributing his aid to confirm the faith of his posterity by the concurrence of his testimony. At length, in strict agreement with the earliest intimations and with every successive repetition of them, the plan is completely unfolded to our view in the person, the doctrines, the performances, and the sufferings, of our Redeemer. Lastly, the apostles of Christ, and the early preachers of Christianity, publish to the whole world the way of eternal life: and their communications differ from those of their predecessors, only in the fulness of discovery, and in displaying a finished and completed view of that, which had heretofore been announced in its course of preparation. Here everlasting righteousness is brought in: the vision and the prophecy are sealed up.

Thus do all the sacred messengers of God, from the earliest to the latest time, concur in one illustrious design. You do not discover one pulling down what another had built up. Later prophets do not contradict those who had gone before them. The fabric of revealed religion presents, indeed, a vary-

ing aspect in different ages of the church; but the variety is only such as indicates its gradual advancement. The structure rises higher and higher in successive ages: but its progress and its completion agree in every point with the original plan, and its foundation is the same, being established on the rock of ages. When the plan is brought to its perfection, then the ceremonial and political ordinances of the Mosaic law are taken away: but this, to use the similitude of a great writer, is only for the same reason that the scaffolding of an edifice is removed when the building is completedⁱ.

Every succeeding age in the gradual advancement of revelation lays open a more expanded view of truths which had been before declared. Subsequent notices throw light upon those which had preceded them. Later communications are explanatory of those which had gone before. Different ages, indeed, bring forth appointments of a character distinct from those of foregoing times. Thus, one period is marked by the call of Abraham; another by the giving of the Law; another by the building of the temple. But all these various appointments are to be viewed as having ultimately one tendency and one reference. However insulated in appearance, however detached in time, they nevertheless act together like the various limbs of the body, which effect one harmonious movement because they are actuated by one spirit. Every thing in its proper place and order tends to the same point, and performs its respective part, however subordinate, in establish-

ⁱ Warburton.

ing the authority, confirming the evidence, or promoting the effect, of the Divine counsels for the recovery of fallen man.

Revealed truth appears, indeed, in different ages of the world, to wear a different garb : but the truth itself is in substance the same, the difference consisting only in the unequal measures in which from time to time it has been opened to our view.

Justice and holiness are, at one period, the most prominent qualities in the character of the Deity : at another, these awful perfections are discovered to us harmoniously blended, after a most stupendous manner, with the endearing attributes of mercy, forgiveness, and love. But let the body of revelation be viewed as one entire plan, framed in the counsels of God before the foundation of the world : it will then appear, that the same attributes have been exerted throughout ; and that (not only in the actual sacrifice of our Redeemer, but also in the eternal will of God) righteousness and peace have met together, mercy and truth have kissed each other.

At one period in the progress of revelation, the final purpose of Divine grace appears shrouded under a veil of dark intimation : at another it is openly brought forward to our view in the daylight of the Gospel. But the same unchanging purpose is constantly pursued from the first to the last. Temporary provisions are accommodated to changing circumstances, but still with a constant reference to the same design.

The knowledge imparted in the Old Testament respecting the recovery of fallen man, is far less abundant than that conveyed in the New : but to

the full extent of those limited discoveries which it affords, the former most exactly harmonizes with the latter.

In both these grand divisions of sacred writ, the same natural relation between God and man is uniformly taught: the same glorious perfections are ascribed to the former, the same helpless and guilty condition to the latter. In both, the same right of satisfaction for sin is asserted respecting the Creator: the same want of forgiveness and destitution of merit, respecting the creature. In both, obedience is laid down as the necessary condition of Divine favour: in both it is declared to be void of all meritorious efficacy.

The characteristic differences of the various dispensations are such as constitute the distinction between a scheme of religion *in its progress to perfection*, and the same scheme *after it hath attained perfection*. Those truths of the Gospel which are unrevealed in the Law and the prophets, are kept secret, only till the fulness of time shall come for the seasonable and effectual disclosure of them.

The whole economy of revelation gives its testimony to this truth: that the counsels of God are, like his holy and perfect nature, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. On the ground of this principle we have reason to infer, that the varied aspect and diversified provisions which we find in it, had a constant reference to an uniform design and an unchanging purpose; and that they were accommodated to time and circumstances, so as to communicate the most effectual and extensive success to that purpose, as it is set forth to us in the Gospel.

Thus doth the whole body of scripture, however detached may be its parts, however varied its temporary and relative provisions, exhibit to the view one united system. This harmonious character is principally seen, in the concurrent reference of all its parts to the plan of our redemption through the sacrifice of Christ. Every separate portion of revealed religion has a connexion, nearer or more distant, with this leading purpose. Each distinct provision is subordinate and subservient to this. It is either auxiliary to it, or illustrative of it. Redemption is the great centre-point of scriptural instruction: every other Divine ordinance either meets in this point, or diverges from it. The doctrine of the Atonement is the great and leading doctrine of the Bible from beginning to end. This was darkly intimated to fallen man, before he was expelled from the abode of innocence and bliss. The sacrifices offered by the faithful immediately after the fall, were in unison with this intimation. Abraham rejoiced in it when he saw the day of Christ afar off. The bloody ordinances of the Levitical law shadowed out the same truth in emblem and mystery. The sweet psalmist of Israel spoke a congenial language, when he painted the sufferings of him who was to be the Saviour of men. In strains of mingled sadness and triumph, the prophetic song announced the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who was bruised for our transgressions and wounded for our iniquities: and it bore also, in different ages of the Jewish church, a varied, yet harmonious, testimony, to the great Personage in whom that truth was substantially verified. The latest prophet under the

Law, and the immediate harbinger of the Messiah, proclaims the same truth, when he announces Christ as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Christ himself declares the doctrine, he verifies, and bears witness to it, in his death. The apostles proclaim our Redeemer, as him whom God hath set forth to be a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The holy martyrs under the agonies of death and torture testify the same. Nor does the attestation of it stop here. After the church militant hath maintained it throughout every stage of its warfare, the church triumphant takes up the heavenly theme, resounding it in hymns of exultation and praise to the end of time. It was first heard in the terrestrial Eden, and it ceases not to be heard in the songs of the blessed spirits who inhabit the celestial paradise: “Worthy
“is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and
“riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and
“glory, and blessing^k.”

The argument we are now pursuing will not be seen in its due force and extent, unless we particularly advert to the method, which was adopted by God, of communicating to the world the last and most glorious revelation of his will.

We need not expatiate on a subject so well understood as the excellence of the Gospel. If we say, that in the sublimity of its doctrines; in its awful, but endearing, views of the Divine nature; in its discoveries of the relation subsisting between man and

^k Rev. v. 12.

his Maker ; in its tendency to subdue the corruption of the soul, to heal the disorders, to allay the miseries, to purify the enjoyments, to refine and exalt the happiness, of human life : if we say, that in these respects it infinitely transcends every system of instruction which ever existed in a state of separation from its influence, we assert only that which candour will never venture to dispute.

Look then to the character and the qualifications of those by whom this religion was promulgated to the world. Were they, in genius, in culture, and in learning, equal to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle ? Far from it. Yet if we contrast together the doctrine of these renowned pagans and that of the fishermen of Galilee ; if we weigh their comparative influence in promoting the good, and counteracting the evil, of life : we must pronounce the value of the former to be wholly contemptible. Infidelity will waste its efforts and its ingenuity in vain, while endeavouring to maintain the possibility, that a doctrine, such as Christianity, may have owed its introduction to the sagacity and contrivance of man. So just is that observation of the apostle, “ We have “ this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of “ us¹.”

Here we discern only the commencement, or first stage, of a series of insurmountable difficulties with which Deism has to contend, while endeavouring to account for the existence of Christianity independently of God : and these difficulties we shall find

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

continually enlarging their magnitude, as they progressively occur to our observation. Let us take a distinct view of them, as they stand connected, in succession, with each other.

We have first to consider the impossibility, that a system of doctrine, so sublime and beneficial as the Gospel, should have been the child of human invention; and especially, that it should have sprung from the invention of those who, for the most part, were wholly unqualified by talents and attainments for the instruction of their fellow-creatures. Secondly; if this were accounted for, another difficulty presents itself in the attempt to explain, how any teacher of such a system should be able to maintain throughout a perfect consistency with himself in the doctrines which he taught. Nor let this difficulty be lightly thought of. It is observed, if I mistake not, by one of the ancient fathers, that among all the pagan philosophers, you cannot allege the name of a single individual who was consistent with himself. If this were the case with their systems, how impossible is it, when we regard, on the one hand, the various and comprehensive nature of the doctrines taught in the Gospel; and on the other, the qualifications of each individual teacher by whom those doctrines were delivered; to account, on the supposition of any human means, for that consistency which we find in it^m. But this difficulty be-

^m “ Quis posset indoctus apta inter se et cohærentia fingere; cum philosophorum doctissimi, Plato, et Aristoteles, et Epicurus, et Zenon, ipsi sibi repugnantia et contraria dixerint. *Hæc est enim mendaciorum natura, ut cohærere non possint. Illorum*

comes greatly aggravated at the next step of our progress. We have to consider, that the Gospel was promulgated not by one, but by many persons; by the twelve apostles, St. Paul, and a great multitude of other evangelists and preachers. How could these, without the aid of infallible direction, have been consistent with each other? The wisdom of man could never have produced an agreement, among instructors so numerous, in their expositions of a doctrine so comprehensive. But should it even be asserted, in contradiction of reason and possibility, that the primitive teachers of our religion might have themselves excogitated the system of truths which they published to the world; and that each of them might have taught that system with a concurrence of doctrine so exact and uniform, as never to betray the least inconsistency with either himself or his many associates: it then remains to account for the correspondence and harmony of their doctrine with those anterior revelations which were preparatory to it. For it is to be remembered, that this correspondence was strikingly realized as to many particulars, which lay beyond the influence of their control. Lastly, it remains to be explained, how the messengers of those antecedent revelations could have framed their discoveries to an agreement with that mysterious and wonderful economy, which was to take place, at an age so remote as to baffle their calculations, and under circumstances totally

“*autem [sc. apostolorum] traditio, quia vera est, quadrat undique, ac sibi tota consentit; et ideo persuadet, quia constanti ratione suffulta est.*” Lact. Div. Inst. v. 3.

independent of their knowledge and their will. The Law contained the pattern of those heavenly things which the pregnancy of time was destined to bring to light in the Gospel. The Law contains no promise of eternal life: the Gospel does contain that promise. Herein is seen the harmony of the two economies, the silence of the former with the declarations of the latter: for the former provided not the sacrifice of a Redeemer, as a way of reconciliation between God and man; and the latter assures us, that eternal life is in no other way to be obtained. The Gospel sets forth no other name through which we can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah: and the Law gives no hope of a future life but that which stands connected with the prospect of his advent. Let it be remembered, that Moses was acquainted with the doctrine of a future state; that he must have known its importance; that he, in common with other lawgivers, must have felt the necessity of its influence towards the government of his people: and yet, in the code which he delivered to the Israelites, the sanction of future rewards and punishments is nowhere proposed as a motive to obedience. Of this striking omission, no other reasonable explanation can be given than the following. He could not introduce it without violating the consistency of revealed religion, and contravening that eternal purpose respecting the redemption of man, which was not to be fully disclosed till many ages after his death. Thus, the correspondence of the two covenants evinces the Divine origin of both. The omission of a future state in the one, and the discovery of it in

the other, concur to illustrate the constancy of the Divine counsels: and both the omission and the discovery concur to prove, that the power of an endless life belongs to the priesthood of Christ, and not to the ministry of Moses or the covenant of Sinai.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WANT OF ANTIQUITY AND UNIVERSALITY IN THE SCHEME OF REVELATION, CONSIDERED.

Κατα καιρους οικονομεῖ τα του κόσμου πράγματα ὁ Θεός, ὥς ἀπαιτεῖ το
εὐλογον. Orig. cont. Cels. vi. 79.

BUT that which has now been insisted on as affording an evidence of truth, has also been selected as a topic of objection: and the objection thus advanced has so near a connexion with the leading subject of this treatise, that the purpose of our inquiry would not be satisfied without an examination of it.

Why, it is said, was not the whole plan of our redemption laid open from the earliest times? Why was not the remedy held forth, as soon as the malady had begun to operate? The Gospel professes to be designed for the recovery of fallen man: why then was it not discovered to him immediately after the fall? Why are the communications of Divine grace dispensed with such a sparing hand? The wants of human nature have called aloud for them in every age which has elapsed since the creation: why then were they kept back from the old world, and bestowed exclusively within the last two thousand years?

This objection has been frequently alleged in every age since the first erection of the Christian churchⁿ. A modern deistical writer appears to regard it with peculiar pride and self-complacency:

ⁿ See Orig. cont. Cels. iv. 7. and Arnob. adv. Gen. ii. 63.

since he expresses so strong a confidence of its value, as to be willing to rest the whole cause of infidelity upon it alone^o. Let us see how much it is worth.

Before, however, we enter on a distinct and particular consideration of it, there is one general observation which will not be undeserving of regard: because it applies in common to this and to many other objections, which are framed by the ignorance of man, on a view of those difficulties which are, in the nature of things, necessarily inherent in a scheme of revealed religion.

If a system of religious faith be offered to our acceptance, it is reasonable to expect satisfactory evidence of its authority. But it is quite unreasonable to demand a clear explanation of every circumstance connected with the mode of its introduction: as for instance, why one time of giving it was preferred to another? or, why it was disclosed gradually, and not all at once? If such circumstances involve no contradiction to any rational principle, we ought to rest satisfied. They may transcend the grasp of our intellect, they may lie beyond the appointed sphere of its exercise: but this ought to give no offence to our pride, since it is a necessary consequence of the difference between an infinite and a limited mind; that is, between the Creator and the creature^p.

^o Quoted by Law. *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, p. 42.

^p “Nihil inter Deum hominemque distaret, si consilia et dispositiones illius majestatis æternæ cogitatio assequeretur humana.” Lact. Div. Inst. i. 1. Εἰ τις τούτων σκοπούμενος βασανον

While the former shall surpass the latter, the operations of Supreme Wisdom will of necessity be unmeasurable by the scale of human intelligence. Let us consider, on the one hand, the boundless comprehension of the Divine wisdom and knowledge: let us reflect on that unlimited field of contemplation which lies open to the Deity; embracing all the possibilities, relations, and dependencies, of things in the universe both of matter and spirit, and thence affording the selection of means for the accomplishment of the Divine counsels. Then, again, let us advert to the narrow extent of our own knowledge, the restricted sphere of our observation, and the limited capacities of our reason. How little of that knowledge, on which the Divine decrees are framed, lies open to our view! How little of it is our mental vision strong enough to embrace! Shall we then expect, that every proceeding of an Infinite Mind should be intelligible to us? Shall we question the wisdom of such proceedings, when we cannot discern it? Let us remember that God is in heaven, and we on earth: let us remember the station that we fill, and the sentiments that become it; the majesty of our Creator, and the reverence which it claims from us. “Who,” says the prophet Isaiah, “hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the

λαμβάνοι, το της ανθρωπινης και θειας φυσεως ηγνοηκως αν ειη διαφορον.
Platonis Timæus.

“ Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?
 “ With whom took he counsel, and who instructed
 “ him, and taught him in the path of judgment,
 “ and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him
 “ the way of understanding^q?”

“ There is no searching of the understanding of
 “ God^r,” says the same eloquent prophet. It is im-
 possible that any creature; and especially that one
 who belongs to the lowest order of rational crea-
 tures; should embrace that infinite range of know-
 ledge which lies open to the Supreme Intelligence,
 or form any conception of those endless possibilities,
 arrangements, and combinations, from which good
 or evil may eventually predominate. That which
 seems to us to be good may, in its ultimate ten-
 dency and in its most extended operation, prove to
 be evil: that which seems to us evil may, on the
 same enlarged view, prove to be good; because we
 judge from the knowledge of a small part, in a case
 where we cannot judge correctly without a know-
 ledge of the whole. Would the feeble lamp that
 guides your steps amidst thick surrounding dark-
 ness, enable you to estimate the wise and harmo-
 nious contrivance of this earth? How much less
 then, circumscribed as you are with regard to the
 region of knowledge, and restricted as to your
 powers of judgment and observation, shall you be
 able to estimate the proceedings of an Infinite Mind,
 whose counsels are framed, on a view of circum-
 stances which are hidden from your sight, and on
 principles which your faculties cannot entertain!

Let us remember then, that the dispensations of

^q Is. xl. 12—14.

^r Ibid. 28.

any religion which comes from God are framed according to a perfect wisdom and an universal knowledge: they must therefore of necessity be unaccountable in many particulars to a being, in whom the gifts of wisdom and the opportunities of knowledge are restricted within narrow limits. Hence will difficulties be necessarily inherent in every system of true religion: even those difficulties on which, as its favourite topics, infidelity delights to expatiate. This is a necessary consequence of the relation in which we stand to God; whose provisions for our welfare will be framed agreeably to his own perfections, his unbounded knowledge and wisdom, and not accommodated to the measures of intellectual power and excellence which he hath communicated to us: since an adaptation of those provisions to our weakness would be only compromising our happiness to gratify our pride, and would at once cut off all exercise of that humility which is the appropriate virtue of the rank we occupy among created beings. And if difficulties be, according to the nature of things, necessarily inherent in a true revelation; it must follow, that the total absence of such difficulties in a scheme of religion, would, abstractedly considered, be so far from affording any just recommendation of it, that it would on the contrary yield a strong presumption against its authority and truth. However then, to the hasty view of an inconsiderate mind, the want of universality in a scheme of revealed religion may appear to militate against its authority; still, if the foregoing consideration be allowed its due weight, it will be found impossible to prove, but that the time and manner

of its introduction, and all other circumstances connected with it, may have been so ordained, as to impart to that scheme the most extensive and beneficial effect of which it was capable. And when we reflect on that wonderful manifestation of mercy to fallen man, of which the characters are so conspicuously traced in the Gospel, we have the most abundant reason to rest our minds in a firm but humble conviction, that they actually have been so ordained; and that as to this, as well as all other particulars, “the present system of the world is the very best that could be with regard to the mind of God in framing it^s.”

Thus much in general, with regard to all objections of a character similar to that which we have more particularly in view. We will now proceed to a distinct examination of that specific objection itself.

Let us suppose then, that the Gospel had possessed that antiquity and universality the want of which is here objected to it. It remains that we should inquire, whether, on this supposition, it would have stood on a ground more favourable than it now does to the attainment of the objects it has in view.

There are but two ways in which the fact here supposed could have been realized. In order that we may justly estimate the force and value of the objection, let us examine them both.

First then let us suppose, that immediately after the fall of man, the Gospel, in all its present fulness

^s Abp. King, *Origin of Evil*, p. 121. ed. 1739.

and clearness of discovery, as a covenant of reconciliation with God through the blood of Christ, had been prospectively offered to our first parents with a view to its universal diffusion among their posterity. Thus promulgated, how can you be sure that it would have been universally embraced? For nothing less than universality will satisfy your demands. Would you have had some divine appointment, by virtue of which its reception should have been in every case a necessary effect of its being made known? If so, your objection amounts to much the same thing as if it were asked, Why did not God create man a machine, to be actuated only by a physical and necessary impulse, not a rational and moral determination? For it is surely nothing less than an absurdity and a contradiction, to imagine a necessity of embracing that which men are free to embrace or not. The course of our future observations will lead us to shew, that in this case, the reception of revealed religion would, if we may reason from the natural and ordinary course of human affairs, have been even more limited than it now is. But let us suppose the contrary: let us suppose that true religion, thus made known to mankind, had been universally embraced. Then consider what would have been the natural consequence. The pretensions of our Redeemer, at the appointed time of his appearance upon earth, would have been universally acknowledged, and his person would have been regarded with love and reverence by all the sons of men. Now the redemption of man is effected through the sacrifice of the death of Christ: and the pride, the malice, the cruelty, and

wickedness, of men, are the instruments which God permitted to work for the infliction of that death. How then could the appointments of divine grace and providence, such as they are now made known to us, and such as we believe to have originated in the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness: how, I say, could such appointments have been carried into effect consistently with the supposition, that the Messiah had been universally acknowledged and adored on his first appearance in the flesh? This reasoning will be found to concur with the language of scripture: “We speak the wisdom of God in a
 “mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: *which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*†.”

Secondly, The only remaining supposition on which the objection can be entertained is the following. We must imagine, then, that the whole of the Gospel; embracing not only its doctrine, but also the facts with which that doctrine is inseparably connected; had been made known to our first parents in order to its subsequent diffusion among their posterity. We must also imagine, that, previously to the communication of such knowledge, the facts themselves, on which the doctrine of Christianity is grounded, had actually taken place: that is to say, that the Son of God had appeared in the flesh; that he had accomplished our redemption by the sacrifice of himself; that he had afforded to

† 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

mankind the knowledge and the benefit of all those means of reconciliation with God, which, as the Gospel informs us, were eventually conferred. by his ministry.

This hypothesis is harsh in the extreme. The difficulties inherent in it are so many and so great, that the mind cannot entertain the possibility of its being realized in a manner worthy of the Divine attributes. Let us however, for the sake of argument, pass over its perplexities, and admit its possibility. The question which remains for our examination is the following: Whether, on this view of things, the benefits of revealed religion would have been more extensively enjoyed among mankind, than has been the case under those provisions, which, according to the testimony of scripture, have actually been made for that purpose?

Let it then be observed, that the benefits arising from any scheme of religion must depend on its reception: and again, that its reception must depend on the evidence by which it is supported. We are to inquire then, whether, if the Gospel had been published at that early age which the present objection supposes, the evidence of its truth would have been so powerful and convincing as it now is? The contrary of this, if I mistake not, will plainly and necessarily follow from a fair examination of the question. In fact, Christianity would, by this early promulgation, have been weakened, as to all those principal sources from which the arguments in its favour are now derived.

In the first place, it would have been deprived of the whole body of its external evidence: since the

uncivilized and unlettered state of the world in the infancy of the human race, admitted not the framing and transmission of those records from which such evidence is derived. But you may say, why then were not the late and slow discoveries of art anticipated by a special ordinance of providence, in subserviency to a purpose so valuable, as that of handing down the historical proofs of a true religion. "Such," to use the words of Origen with reference to another subject, "is the language of those objectors to Providence, who frame to their own minds an imaginary constitution of things, differing from that which exists in the world; and who say, that the world would have been better ordered if things had been thus and thus appointed. Where the suppositions of these men are possible, they are detected upon examination to be productive in their tendency of greater evil than what actually prevails in the world: and whenever this tendency does not belong to them, it may then be shewn that their demands are in the nature of things impossible^u." Here the matter is placed in its just and true light. If there be any thing faulty in the observation, it is, that the deteriorating tendency and impossibility of the schemes involved in such objections, are stated by this ancient father to be discoverable by us. Doubt-

^u Τοῦτο δοκεῖ μοι ὁμοίον εἶναι τῷ λόγῳ τῶν ἀντιδιατασσόντων τῇ προνοίᾳ, καὶ διαγραφόντων ἑαυτοῖς ἕτερα παρὰ τὰ ὄντα, καὶ λεγόντων, ὅτι βελτίον ἦν εἰ οὕτως εἶχεν ὁ κόσμος, ὥς διεγραψάμεν. Ὅπου μὲν γὰρ δυνατόν διαγραφόντων, ἐλεγχόνται χειρόνα ποιοῦντες, τὸ ὅσον ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς, [καὶ] τῇ διαγραφῇ αὐτῶν, τὸν κόσμον· ὅπου δὲ δοκοῦσι μὴ χειρόνα ἀναζῶγραφειν τῶν ὄντων, ἀποδείκνυνται τὰ τῇ φύσει ἀδύνατα βουλομένοι· ὥς ἑκάτερος αὐτοὺς καταγέλαστους εἶναι. Cont. Cels. ii. 68.

less they are so, to the utmost extent of our reason and knowledge. But the same tendency, or the same impossibility, will certainly belong to them in many instances, where, by reason of our ignorance and weakness, they are undiscoverable to us: and we have a right to suppose, for we cannot know the contrary, that one or both of them are inherent in the matter of this objection. You may however rejoin: The defect of external proof, thus occasioned, might have been compensated by a succession of miracles, to be brought forward at whatever time and place such evidence might be required. But if we suppose this frequency and this universal diffusion of miraculous evidence; how, I would ask, would miracles then be distinguishable from natural effects? If they were not thus distinguishable, how could they avail as evidence? The very reason which renders a miraculous interposition necessary at particular seasons and for special purposes, militates against its perpetual introduction and its universal application. It is of the very nature of a miracle, not merely that it should be unaccountable to man: for that the ordinary operations of nature are: but that it should moreover be wonderful and extraordinary. If these latter qualities be taken from it, its essential character is destroyed, and its intention frustrated ^x.

^x It is justly observed by the great Bossuet, [Discours sur l'histoire universelle,] that "God," in order to supply the evidence of his existence and power, "has manifested to mankind " a benignity worthy of himself in reversing, upon signal occasions, the order of nature, *by which men were wholly unaffected, " because they were accustomed to it.*" If the objection we have now been considering were satisfied by a concession of its demands; it will readily be seen, that mankind, being as much ac-

Secondly, The truth of Christianity, as it is now proposed to us, is evinced by a long series of prophecies. These predictions extend successively through a period of about four thousand years. Great part of them were delivered in dark and barbarous times. The whole of them, those at least which foretell the first publication of the Gospel, were verified in an age of enlightened refinement; when the cultured faculties of the human mind concurred with the extension of learning and science, to facilitate a comparison between the prediction and the event. All these predictions bear a separate, but concurrent, testimony to the Messiah, enumerating and describing the leading characteristics by which his person and dispensation should be known. Of this testimony the character of our Lord must have been deprived^y: a species of testi-

customed to miracles as to the regular movements of nature, would be as little affected by them. The following remark of bishop Conybeare will help to enforce our conclusion. "Let us see what must be the *consequence* of this demand of new miracles. For the same reason that men refuse to receive the Christian religion, unless there are some *new miracles* wrought to confirm it, they might refuse to receive it, unless they were *themselves* witnesses of those miracles: and since *no one man* hath reason to expect any extraordinary methods of conviction beyond another, it follows, that miracles must be wrought for the conviction of *every individual person*: and if such facts should become so *common*, it is hard to determine how they should be distinguished from mere natural effects; for we judge of what is *natural* or *supernatural* by *observation* and *experience*. So that this method of establishing religion, which hath been demanded, doth really tend to undermine and destroy it."

Disc. on Miracles.

^y Graves's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 385.

mony, which, like a river expanding in its progress, gathers strength in proportion to the tract through which it extends.

Thirdly, We are to have regard to the purpose of God in separating to his more especial service a peculiar people. This people was chosen as the depositary of those divine oracles, which were to bear witness to the great Restorer of mankind and to establish his authority. It was separated from the idolatries and superstitions of the heathen world, in order to maintain among men those notices of true religion, which were to qualify them for deciding on the pretensions of Christianity, and which, without such provision, would, in the natural course of things, have become wholly extinct. The welfare of this people was guarded, and their temporal affairs were governed, by a special miraculous providence. Thus, through a long tract of ages, was the stamp of divine authority impressed on those peculiar religious institutions, which were designed to be auxiliary to the evidence, illustration, and effect, of the Gospel. By the same means also were credentials given to the prophets, whose predictions were to guide the judgments of mankind in estimating the pretensions of the Messiah. In fine, the Israelitish church and polity, in every part of their economy, and through the whole extent of their duration, were designed to be auxiliary to the Christian scheme of redemption. But whatever aid they afford in strengthening the evidence, and recommending the claims, of the Gospel: of this aid the Gospel must necessarily have been deprived, if the mode of its introduction into the world had been framed

agreeably to the views of those objections to whom we are replying.

Fourthly, Let us turn our attention to the several detached communications of revealed truth, continually enlarging through successive ages, but wearing a consistent character from first to last. Let us regard the unity of design pervading the varied economy of grace and providence, in all those ordinances and revelations which occur from the first promise to the promulgation of the Gospel. Let us consider the combined effect of so many separate rays of evidence meeting together in one splendid testimony to the unity and divinity of the Author of Christianity. This must have been wholly lost to the Gospel, if the publication of the Gospel had been immediately subsequent to the fall of man.

Lastly, a principal disadvantage, accruing to the Gospel from this arrangement, would have consisted in the entire annihilation of its internal evidence.

With a view to the proof of this assertion, I trust I shall make it appear, that, had the Gospel been published at that early date which this objection supposes, a general disesteem of its blessings, and scepticism as to its authority, would have naturally resulted from such an appointment.

As the evidence of Christianity now stands, the excellence of the Gospel itself is much and justly dwelt upon in stating the proofs of its authority. Now this species of evidence derives its force and its illustration almost wholly from contrast. The character and effects of the Gospel cannot be fully understood and appreciated, without a comparative regard to those of other religious and moral systems ;

and a reference to the state of mankind, as it is made known to us by history and observation, in those times and countries to which the benefit of revelation has been denied. Of this advantage the Gospel must, on the supposition of its primeval communication, have been destitute. If its light had been fully dispensed from the first, there could have been no previous experience of evils arising from the want of it. It must thus have been deprived of that support which it derives from a most powerful and convincing argument of its Divine original. The consequence is unavoidable: in proportion to the weakness of its evidence must have been the probability of its rejection.

It will be worth our while to bestow on this subject a more extended consideration. If we survey, then, the general character of pagan theology; we find a subject calculated to awaken the most painful emotions. Its wild absurdity and folly will prompt us to commiserate the degradation of the human mind: the cruelty of its worship, and the multitude of human victims who bled upon its altars, will excite our horror: the loathsome obscenity interwoven with its essence, and frequently displayed in its public solemnities, will provoke our disgust: lastly, the evil passions and various detestable wickedness which it ascribed to its fictitious divinities, will discover to us a system of faith, whose influence must have been destructive of the virtue and welfare of such as embraced it. These are the general features of polytheism, in all that variety of forms in which it hath prevailed throughout the world: these, in particular, are the features which it presents, as it

occurs to our notice in the politest nations of antiquity. But these, it may be said, are but the gross errors of vulgar superstition; and it is the boast of philosophy to liberate mankind from their slavery. Let us pass then from the temples of paganism, into her schools of wisdom and learning: let us see whether we can discover in them a doctrine, more agreeable to the dignity of our nature, and more conducive to its happiness. It will be impossible for candour to assert, that any considerable improvement is to be found here. Philosophy was sometimes keen enough to discern the falsehood of an idolatrous creed, but it could not penetrate to the discovery of religious truth^z. It might clear away the rubbish of mythology, but it could not explore the great foundations of human duty, of self-command, of piety to God, and benevolence to man. In the lessons which it taught, we find, at one time a vice exalted into a virtue; at another, a virtue degraded into a vice. We find an avowal of almost every folly which ever crept into the human mind. We find a defence of almost every depravity which has infected the hearts, and every crime which has stained the practice, of mankind. We find in its professors a double-

^z “ Multi philosophorum religiones sustulerunt; verum autem
 “ scire, divinæ est sapientiæ. Homo autem per seipsum perve-
 “ nire ad hanc scientiam non potest, nisi doceatur a Deo. Ita
 “ philosophi, quod summum fuit humanæ sapientiæ, assecuti
 “ sunt, ut intelligerent, quid non sit: illud assequi nequiverunt,
 “ ut dicerent, quid sit. Nota Ciceronis vox est: Utinam tam
 “ facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere. Quod quia
 “ vires humanæ conditionis excedit, ejus officii facultas nobis est
 “ attributa, quibus tradidit Deus scientiam veritatis.” Lact. Div.
 Inst. ii. 3.

dealing and deceitful way of treating their subjects, which renders it impossible to distinguish between their professed and their real opinions. We find them placing the obligations of duty on a wrong basis, and inculcating precepts which are wholly subversive of it. We find an infinity of jarring representations respecting the nature of God, and the future destiny of man. We listen in their turns to the Stoick, the Epicurean, the Peripatetick, the Platonist, and the Academic: and we find them all contradictory to each other, and each inconsistent with himself. On the whole, we find ourselves surrounded by darkness, and involved in perplexity, as to all those pursuits of truth and happiness in which a clear light and a straight path are most needful to us.

Having thus reviewed the religion and philosophy of paganism; we must in the next place consider the practical influence of such persuasions and doctrines.

The moral sentiments and practice of mankind will naturally be determined in their character and complexion by their religious tenets: their practice will correspond with their faith. If this undeniable principle be applied to the heathen mythology, it will guide us to a correct estimate of its tendency and value. “It cannot be difficult to explain the “reasons,” says Lactantius, “why probity and justice are incompatible with the character of a heathen worshipper. For how can they abstain from “bloodshed, that worship gods who delight in it? “How shall they maintain filial piety, that worship “a Jupiter who dethroned and banished his father? “or they respect the tenderness of their offspring,

“ who offer their adoration to a Saturn, the devourer
 “ of his children? How shall they observe chastity,
 “ who address their supplications to a goddess of
 “ adultery, prostitution, and obscenity? How shall
 “ an abstinence from rapine and fraud be expected
 “ in the worshippers of Mercury, in those who know
 “ the history of his thefts, and who have learned
 “ from his instruction, that such deceptions are not
 “ to be hated as criminal, but admired as ingenious?
 “ How can you expect a government of their pas-
 “ sions from those, who address their prayers to Ju-
 “ piter, Hercules, Bacchus, Apollo, and other dei-
 “ ties, whose flagitious impurities and abominable
 “ lusts are noted in common fame, celebrated in
 “ theatres, recorded in songs, and published in every
 “ way that can promote their notoriety? With these
 “ examples before them, can virtue exist among
 “ men? It is impossible. Though nature had
 “ formed them to virtue, they must have been led
 “ into wickedness by the training and instruction of
 “ their gods. For in order to gain the favour of
 “ the God whom you worship, your conduct must
 “ be such as that God delights in. Thus it is, that
 “ *the character of the God who is worshipped will*
 “ *influence the life of his worshippers; since the*
 “ *imitation of God is the very essence of religious*
 “ *worship*^a.”

^a Div. Inst. v. 10. The above reasoning is well illustrated in the following lines of Catullus :

“ Sæpe etiam Juno maxima cœlicolum

“ Conjugis in culpa flagravît cottidiana,

“ Noscens omnivoli plurima furta Jovis.

“ Atqui nec Divis homines componier æquum est.” 1. 135.

The character of the heathen mythology is largely illustrated

This demoralizing tendency would naturally operate, in its fullest force, on the bulk of those by whom the doctrines of paganism were professed. Nor will it be found, on inquiry, that its operation was wholly limited to the unreflecting multitude. Of such doctrines it might indeed be supposed, that they could support their credit only in minds qualified, by abject ignorance and stupid credulity, for their reception: but this is not the fact. We have historical proof, that some of the most eminent philosophers were not able to divest themselves of its influence. Socrates, we know, at his last hour, and with his last words, gave directions for an act, which evinced his mental compliance with the popular idolatry of his country: and Xenophon, who framed his own conduct by the pattern of his master, was distinguished through life by an adherence to similar observances^b.

But though it should be admitted, that philosophy had strength enough to break the chains of prevailing superstition: it then remains for us to ask, What were the philosophers themselves with regard to the moral obligations of life? How was the efficacy of their doctrine illustrated in their practice? In the multitudes, indeed, who claim the honours of philo-

by Plato, in agreement with the foregoing remarks, in the second and third books of his Republic. The general purport of his reasoning may be gathered from the following remark, which is extracted from that part of his work. Οὐ λεκτεοὶ γ' [οὔτοι οἱ λόγοι] ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ πόλει. Οὐδὲ λεκτεὸν νεφ' ἀκούοντι, ὥς ἀδικῶν τὰ ἐσχάτα, οὐδὲν ἀν' θαυμαστον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ δρῶν ἀν' ὅπερ θεῶν οἱ πρῶτοι τε καὶ μεγιστοί. Lib. 2.

^b Εὐσεβῆς τε καὶ φιλοθυτος, καὶ ἱερεῖα διαγινῶναι ἱκανός, καὶ Σωκράτη ζήλωσας ἀκριβῶς. Diog. Laert. lib. II. in Xen.

sophy, a great diversity of feature and complexion may naturally be expected : but we shall invariably find the philosophical character far remote from every correct notion of virtue. Always does it appear to us stained with pride, sensuality, avarice, or some disgraceful vice : in no case is it exempt from some considerable deviation from rectitude : in many instances, the secret retirements of the sage are polluted with the most flagitious and loathsome wickedness : and oftentimes that wickedness does not even shun detection, nor wear the slightest veil of modesty or shame.

These considerations will enable us to estimate truly the wretchedness of the human soul, when darkened by false religion, and perverted by false science. And it may surely be asserted, that if a favourable view of the human character, as it exists independently of revelation, could any where be found, it would present itself in the ancient nations of Greece and Rome : for there the powers of the human mind were highly improved by philosophy, literature, and the elegant arts of life. If the teaching of Socrates, and the writings of Cicero, were inadequate to the moral improvement of mankind ; where could virtue be expected under advantages far inferior ? What then must have been the condition of by far the largest part of the world ? Go through the records of history and examine the reports of travellers : search the accounts of every age and people on which the lamp of revelation never shone : consider the state of those nations, whose atmosphere is still darkened by the clouds of superstition and idolatry : observe the folly and

wickedness of their religious faith; the cruelty and impurity which is naturally engendered by it; the debasing character of their worship, and the pernicious tenets of their morality. It would carry us beyond all due limits to substantiate this point by a reference to particulars. But to cut the matter short: it is impossible that any well instructed mind should dispute the truth of this general position, That human nature, wherever it is found out of the pale of revelation, exhibits, through every tract of time and place, one uniform complexion of moral and intellectual debasement.

Indeed, if we would rightly compute the powers of the human mind, and their efficacy in the production of happiness and virtue; our estimate should be taken, not from the polite refinement of Athenian and Roman antiquity, but wholly and exclusively from the condition of those barbarous nations to whom we have in the last instance referred. The justice of this observation is placed in a forcible light by an elegant writer on the Internal Evidence of Christianity. "Mankind," says he, "have undoubtedly at various times from the remotest ages received so much knowledge by divine communications, and have ever been so much inclined to impute it all to their own sufficiency, that it is now difficult to determine what human reason unassisted can effect: but to form a true judgment on this subject, let us turn our eyes to those remote regions of the globe, to which this supernatural assistance has never yet extended, and we shall there see men endued with sense and reason not inferior to our own, so far from being capable

“ of forming systems of religion and morality, that
“ they are at this day totally unable to make a nail
“ or a hatchet : from whence we may surely be con-
“ vinced, that reason alone is so far from being suf-
“ ficient to offer to mankind a perfect religion, that
“ it has never yet been able to lead them to any de-
“ gree of culture, or civilization whatever. These
“ have uniformly flowed from that great fountain of
“ divine communication opened in the east, in the
“ earliest ages, and thence been gradually diffused
“ in salubrious streams, throughout the various re-
“ gions of the earth. Their rise and progress, by
“ surveying the history of the world, may easily be
“ traced backwards to their source ; and wherever
“ these have not as yet been able to penetrate, we
“ there find the human species not only void of all
“ true religious and moral sentiments, but not the
“ least emerged from their original ignorance and
“ barbarity ; which seems a demonstration, that al-
“ though human reason is capable of progression in
“ science, yet the first foundations must be laid by
“ supernatural instructions : for surely no other pro-
“ bable cause can be assigned, why one part of man-
“ kind should have made such an amazing progress
“ in religious, moral, metaphysical, and philosophical
“ inquiries ; such wonderful improvements in policy,
“ legislation, commerce, and manufactures, while the
“ other part, formed with the same natural capaci-
“ ties, and divided only by seas and mountains,
“ should remain, during the same number of ages,
“ in a state little superior to brutes, without govern-
“ ment, without laws or letters, and even without
“ clothes and habitations ; murdering each other to

“satisfy their revenge, and devouring each other to
“appease their hunger: I say no cause can be as-
“signed for this amazing difference, except that the
“first have received information from those divine
“communications recorded in the Scriptures, and
“the latter have never yet been favoured with such
“assistance^c.”

As the current of disquisition has led to a citation from this writer, I cannot forbear to subjoin, as generally illustrative of our present subject, his observations respecting the powers of reason and their efficacy, as they have been discovered under circumstances more favourable to their beneficial operation.

“And as reason in her natural state is thus incapable of making any progress in knowledge; so
“when furnished with materials by supernatural
“aid, if left to the guidance of her own wild imaginations, she falls into more numerous and more
“gross errors, than her own native ignorance could
“ever have suggested. There is then no absurdity
“so extravagant, which she is not ready to adopt:
“she has persuaded some, that there is no God;
“others, that there can be no future state: she has
“taught some, that there is no difference between
“vice and virtue, and that to cut a man’s throat,
“and to relieve his necessities, are actions equally
“meritorious: she has convinced many, that they
“have no free-will, in opposition to their own experience; some, that there can be no such thing as
“soul, or spirit, contrary to their own perceptions;
“and others, no such thing as matter or body, in

^c Jenyns’s View of the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion. Conclusion.

“contradiction to their senses. By analysing all things she can shew, that there is nothing in any thing; by perpetual shifting she can reduce all existence to the invisible dust of scepticism; and by recurring to first principles, prove to the satisfaction of her followers, that there are no principles at all. How far such a guide is to be depended on in the important concerns of religion and morals, I leave to the judgment of every considerate man to determine. This is certain, that human reason in its highest state of cultivation amongst the philosophers of Greece and Rome, was never able to form a religion comparable to Christianity; nor have all those sources of moral virtue, such as truth, beauty, and the fitness of things, which modern philosophers have endeavoured to substitute in its stead, ever been effectual to produce good men, and have themselves often been the productions of some of the worst^d.”

It is now time to point out the bearing of the foregoing remarks on the conclusion they are designed to establish.

It is by a reference to the condition of ignorant and superstitious nations, that the internal evidence of Christianity is made to appear in the lustre of Divine beauty and the power of irresistible conviction. When we contemplate the doctrines of that religion as they are delivered to us in scripture; and the practical tendency of those doctrines as they are developed by experience: we have just reason to contend, that its original must have been very

^d Jenyns's View of the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion. Conclusion.

different from that to which we attribute the foolish and mischievous superstitions of paganism. Thus does the internal evidence of the Gospel derive its force and illustration from comparison. This species of argument, subsisting as it does in union with the strong fabric of external proof, has always been found a most effective instrument for the conviction of the unbeliever, and the establishment of the faithful. Now, on the supposition that our religion is what it professes to be, it is only reasonable to suppose that its Divine Author intended that its evidence should operate after the manner we have described.

Let me then conclude this part of the subject with a few words of expostulation to those objectors, who complain of the Gospel on account of the late introduction and partial communication of its light.

Religion, in order to its being embraced by a reasonable creature, must necessarily be supported by such evidence as may suffice for the conviction of a reasonable mind. This evidence, we contend, has actually been afforded in support of the Gospel, and stands connected with those means which the Divine Wisdom hath employed of bringing it into the world. That any other means would have been more extensively effectual to the purposes of Divine Grace and Mercy in the conversion of mankind, is a supposition you cannot indulge without folly and presumption: since it is a subject on which you are by no means qualified, either by the powers with which you have been gifted, or the knowledge you possess, to decide. The fabric of evidence on which

Christianity is supported you now behold: but of this evidence no portion whatever could have existed, if the knowledge of Christianity, in all the fulness of its discoveries, had been, from the earliest time, commensurate with the inhabited earth. Thus, had the scheme of revelation been framed agreeably to your notions of what is best, a much wider field of cavil and objection would have lain open to you, than that which you now enjoy. Indeed, these notions involve a contradiction in themselves. Had the Gospel been as early as you desire, it would not, in the natural course of things, have been so extensively diffused. For it must then have been destitute of that evidence which it now enjoys: and mankind would have shaken off its authority, if they had never been made acquainted with its excellence by either the knowledge or the experience of those miseries which are connected with the want of it.

The observation of the great Bossuet is highly just and pertinent to our present subject: "Before a Saviour was given, it was necessary that mankind should be brought by long experience to feel how much they stand in need of such an assistance^e."

"It is not easy to give us," says Rotherham, "who were born to the full enjoyment of the Gospel, a strong and adequate idea of the value of a blessing which we have always possessed. Its superiority was more clearly seen at the first appearance of Christianity, when it could be contrasted on one hand with the gross ignorance of the vulgar heathen, and on the other with that

^e Disc. Sur l'Hist. Univ.

“ feeble lamp of philosophy, wherein was collected
“ however all the light that could be supplied from
“ all the sources of human reason. To a world in
“ this situation, to a people ‘ who walked in dark-
“ ness, and dwelt in the land of the shadow of
“ death,’ how astonishing must have been the first
“ appearance of this great light ! We who never
“ walked in darkness are less sensible of this effect ;
“ we see this great light without being struck by it,
“ because the full blaze of day did not burst all at
“ once around our understanding^f.” There are few
reflecting and candid minds which will not acquiesce
in this remark. We are apt to forget the magni-
tude of those blessings we derive from the Gospel,
because the miseries which have been felt in the ab-
sence of it are so remote from our experience. How
then could its excellence have been estimated or
felt, if there had never prevailed a reign of igno-
rance and of false religion with which to contrast
its benign influence ? Yet this contrast it plainly
could not have had, if it had been equally commu-
nicated to every age and country.

^f Essay on Faith, sect. 6.

CHAPTER X.

THE SAME SUBJECT PURSUED. CONCLUSION.

Cum aperiret homini veritatem Deus, ea sola scire nos voluit, quæ interfuit hominem scire ad vitam consequendam: quæ vero ad curiosam et profanam cupiditatem pertinebant, retinuit, ut arcana essent. Quid ergo quæris, quæ nec potes scire, nec si scias, beatior fias? *Lactantii Div. Inst.* ii. 9.

WE might here terminate our reply to those, who allege the want of antiquity and universality in the Gospel as an objection to its truth. But this objection is sometimes placed in a point of view so specious and imposing, that it yields a source of triumph to the sceptic, and awakens an uneasy feeling in the mind of the believer. To counteract its pernicious tendency, being an object of unquestionable moment, may therefore justify the offering of a few additional remarks.

The difficulty we propose to consider may be stated as follows. The Gospel, as its professors contend, is the only religious system which lays open the way of eternal life. The same Gospel denounces eternal misery on all by whom it is not embraced. Yet it is certain, that the largest portion of mankind have in all ages been wholly unacquainted with it: and at this day, the professors of Christianity are few in comparison with the bulk of mankind. Those, moreover, who are ignorant of its doctrines, are so through no fault of their own. Those doctrines have never been offered to their acceptance, and themselves have been placed beyond the reach

of revealed truth, by circumstances which were not subject to their control. What then is the future destiny of these subjects of involuntary ignorance and error? Are they to be consigned to hopeless and eternal misery?

With regard to the difficulty thus stated, it is to be premised, that there are two classes of persons by whom it is, or may be, advanced. These classes must be had in distinct and separate consideration in the reply which is framed to it.

The first class is that of the philosophizing unbeliever: who, taking the foregoing statement as his hypothesis, contends, that it exhibits either the power, the wisdom, or the goodness, of God, as circumscribed within a narrow boundary, and the Deity himself as actuated only by a partial regard for the welfare of his creatures; while he cannot admit any religious system to be worthy of the Divine nature, but that which ascribes to it unlimited perfection and universal benevolence.

The second class is that of the sincere professor of the Gospel: who, though well grounded in the faith, is sometimes subject to an uneasy feeling when this subject occurs to his mind. Such a disposition may sometimes be startled by the difficulty of reconciling this view of things with the sentiments which it cherishes respecting the Divine attributes. To suppose the occurrence of such feelings throws no imputation on the real piety of a Christian. On the contrary, to imagine that even the highest degree of religious conviction should be adequate to the exclusion of every painful and uneasy thought, seems to imply a supposition, that the struggles of

faith may be over, and its final triumph achieved, on this side of the grave; and thus to militate against the notion of a warfare, under which the Christian life is so frequently represented to us in scripture.

Let us then proceed to examine the proposed difficulty with a separate regard to the two descriptions of persons to whom we have adverted. And first with regard to the infidel objector.

You allege that, according to the doctrine of the Gospel, the sentence of eternal misery must necessarily pass on all to whom that doctrine has not been made known. We deny then, that you have the warrant of scripture for this assumption; which if you cannot maintain, whatever inferences you may draw from it to the prejudice of the Gospel, must necessarily fall to the ground.

It is to be observed however, that in order to the purpose of a satisfactory reply to this objection, it is wholly unnecessary to dogmatise on the contrary side to that which the objector has chosen. The advocate for Christianity is not called upon to maintain or avow the negative of the proposition. He is not required to state the true view of the case: it will suffice, if he can shew, that the assertion of his opponent is untenable, and that the ground which has been taken up cannot be maintained.

That the Gospel denounces condemnation on all by whom its offers are rejected, is an awful but undeniable truth. But whether this condemnation embraces also those to whom its overtures were never propounded, is by no means equally manifest. On this point, the obligation of proof rests with those who maintain that it does.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but *he that believeth not shall be damned*.” Is it not justly questionable, whether in these latter words we are authorized to understand any thing further, than the sanction by which the preaching of the Gospel was enforced? To those who had the Gospel offered to them, it was indeed no matter of choice what course they should pursue. They must either embrace it or perish. But it is not clear, that any regard is had in this declaration, to such as might involuntarily continue strangers to it: on the contrary, there is reason to suppose that such persons were not in contemplation when the words were spoken. The former part of the citation delivers our Lord’s injunction to preach the Gospel, with a description of the persons to whom it was to be preached: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Is it not then natural to interpret the latter division of it, as properly applying to those only who were the subjects of the former, and to whom the Gospel would actually be preached? *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Let the following words of our Lord be duly considered. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed

“in the name of the only begotten Son of God. “And *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil^h.*” It will not be denied, that the condemnation here spoken of is the same which is denounced in the text previously quoted. What then is the ground of condemnation here stated? Is it not, that men rejected the truth after it had been made known to them? *Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.* How then can the same condemnation apply to those to whom that truth has never been made known? If this view of the text be just, it yields a corroborative testimony to the exposition we proposed of the former citation from St. Mark.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now have they no cloke for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Fatherⁱ.” Is it not here distinctly stated, that the guilt of the Jews in rejecting the Messiah consisted in their disobedience to the word that was preached, and disregard to the evidence that was offered, to them? If our Lord had not spoken to them, if he had not offered to them the most decided attestation of his Divine authority; they had not had sin. It surely is not easy to reconcile these declarations with the language of those who maintain, that the severe judgment of everlast-

^h John iii. 17, 18, 19. ⁱ John xv. 22, 24.

ing misery will pass upon all who, without any concurrence of their own wills, have lived and died in ignorance of Christian truth.

These considerations have been offered, without any view to the decision of the question, but solely for the purpose of denying the right of decision to those who assume it. What the state of the case really is, we do not pronounce. In the principle which is assumed by the deistical objector, we observe the basis of a reasoning which is injurious to the cause of Christianity. That principle, we contend, is void of all warrant from scripture, the only authority which is in this case admissible. If the principle itself cannot justly be maintained, it would be a needless trouble to debate the validity of the inference which is drawn from it.

The principle thus assumed as the ground of a sceptical objection, has, indeed, been seriously entertained by some Christians, and has even been incorporated into the forms of doctrine which have been professed by certain communities of the Christian world. But the advocate for the Gospel is concerned only with the truth, as it is in Jesus. He has nothing to do with the modifications of science, or the systematic arrangements of scholastic theology. He is not called upon to vindicate any of those extravagant views, through the medium of which the beauty of the Gospel has been obscured and disfigured. Of a question like this he is not obliged to take either the affirmative or the negative side. He has a right to dismiss it altogether, as being among the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God. In truth, there are many points in theology, in regard

to which the silent feeling of reverential humility is more becoming than the language of peremptory decision. This we conceive to be one of them. With regard to those who maintain a different opinion, we cannot so far compromise the cause of sacred truth out of deference to them, as to suffer, that the evidence of the Gospel should be placed on such a footing as to stand or fall with any peculiarities of their doctrine. The principle now under consideration ought, we contend, before it is employed as a ground of argument, to be supported by stronger proof than any which it is capable of receiving. And if we regard the many shining lights of the Christian church, who have, in every age, maintained the contrary proposition, its truth must appear in the highest degree questionable and dubious.

Our attention is in the next place due to the doubts and difficulties of the believing Christian. If the benefit of the Gospel be limited to so small a portion of the human race, what will be the doom of those who never had an opportunity of coming to its light? Will they perish everlastingly, because they have not embraced a blessing which has been placed beyond their reach? A few remarks may here be fitly introduced with regard to the general character of the difficulty proposed.

The disposition which suggests this inquiry springs from a faulty indulgence of a propensity, which nature has wisely implanted in the human soul, as a stimulus to the acquisition of necessary and useful knowledge. The proper sphere for this propensity is, the pursuit of that knowledge which may teach the way of happiness and the obligations of duty.

When the spirit of inquiry goes beyond the boundaries of this its legitimate province, it will always be found at the same time neglectful of more proper employments. He who is engaged in vain and curious speculations respecting the condition of benighted heathens, will be in danger of forgetting the application to himself of that awful question, What must I do to be saved?

In regard to this particular, the wisdom and benevolence which appeared in the conduct of our Redeemer are equally remarkable and edifying. When a question was proposed to him which had for its object the welfare of the inquirer, his answer was full and explicit. Thus when he is asked, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" he replies, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments^k." Of the same character is the conduct of St. Paul with regard to the interrogation, "What must I do to be saved?" The reply is direct to the point: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved^l." Very different is the treatment of those inquiries which spring from a distempered and unregulated curiosity. When for instance our Lord is inquired of, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" the question is followed by an admonition far more beneficial to the querist, than the information desired: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able^m." On another occasion, when he is interrogated re-

^k Matth. xix. 16, 17.

^l Acts xvi. 30, 31.

^m Luke xiii. 23, 24.

specting a subject which had no connexion with either the duties or the interests of the inquirer, his answer is, "What is that to thee? follow thou meⁿ." On such occasions, the information solicited, so far from being useful to the inquirer, would have given encouragement to a disposition highly pernicious to him who indulges it; and as the inquiry related to the secret counsels of God, the disclosure of them would have been inconsistent with the wise arrangements of his providential government. Of the same character, we conceive, is the question to which our present observations are more immediately directed.

That the largest portion of the human race still lie in darkness and in the shadow of death, is a fact which ought not to furnish the occasion of curious and impertinent speculation, but to suggest a practical obligation of duty. With reference to this subject, the words, *Follow thou me*, constitute a precept of personal application to every individual Christian. It would be well if the mind, whenever it wanders beyond the just limits of inquiry, could be brought back to its proper sphere of contemplation by a recollection of them.

If a fellow-creature were seen struggling with the waves and far from land, what would be the proper course to pursue? Would it be to stand idle, to speculate concerning the event, and to balance the chances of escape and destruction? Or would it not be to put forth our exertions without delay for his rescue? Similar to this should be our conduct

ⁿ John xxi. 22.

with regard to those countless families of mankind, who are aliens from the covenant of God, and ignorant of the way of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus. Our Lord had compassion on the multitude, because they were as sheep having no shepherd. If we profess in sincerity the faith which he taught, ought not that compassion to affect our hearts also? He submitted to the deepest humiliation, underwent the most laborious toils, and endured the most unutterable pains, that he might proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Shall the same object be regarded by us with indifference? How can such a disposition accord with that of our Divine Master? The same mind should be in us which was also in him. If it be not, where is our obedience to the call, Follow thou me?

To promote to the utmost of our power the extension of the faith, is an obligation inseparable from the Christian character. Scarcely any truth can be less disputable than this. It must then be the bounden duty of every man who professes the Christian name, to further the labours of the missionary by every method, which, in the exercise of a candid judgment, he may approve. For how shall the heathen believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Such is the plain and simple ground of obligation with regard to the subject of missions. And this obligation must be regarded as embracing, not only the duty of contributing each his separate assistance

to the work; but also that of exciting, to the utmost of our power, a kindred zeal and interest in the bosoms of others: for we are to provoke one another to love and to good works. By so doing shall we exercise a proper feeling of gratitude to God, by whom we ourselves have been called out of our natural darkness into his marvellous light: that as we have received mercy, we should by the manifestation of the truth commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God ^P.

We propose not here to specify the methods by which this work ought to be carried on. Nor do we intend to canvass the merits of various plans which are actually employed for that purpose. We contend only in general, that a lively interest in the subject ought to be both felt and exerted. A scrupulous anxiety respecting the orthodoxy of the missionary is not to be condemned, but strenuously insisted upon. But if we feel upon this subject as we ought to do, we cannot pretend an exemption from the duty of assisting such enterprises as pursue this important object, without any compromise of sound doctrine, or the employment of any injudicious means. Nay, if there be any institutions, professing this design, whose principles and conduct are to us unexceptionable, we ought for this very reason to espouse their cause with the greater zeal: because the more of this important work is done on principles in unison with those of our own church, the ground, being so far occupied by ourselves, is consequently taken away from those who dissent from that doc-

trine which we believe to be true, and that discipline which we venerate as apostolical.

But the subject of missions will doubtless be regarded with great variety of sentiment. A difference of judgment will exist as to the most suitable methods of conducting them: and the measure of success to be expected from such undertakings will be variously computed. By some, it is to be feared that the estimate will be framed below the just amount of probable expectation. This is deeply to be lamented; since a prospect which gives little encouragement to hope must naturally chill the ardour of enterprise. By some it will be thought, that no considerable extension of the Christian church can reasonably be expected without a great and special providential interposition; and that we must wait therefore for some signal revolution to be brought about by God who ruleth over all things. After this manner, indeed, was the Gospel first established on the ruins of pagan idolatry: and it may be expected by some, that a similar interposition will take place in order to give to the Christian faith a complete and universal triumph.

But the present subject is not a matter of mere calculation. We cannot, in this case, claim to ourselves a liberty of acting or not, according to the measure of good which we think may eventually crown our efforts. It is a matter of duty: the Gospel requires it of us: we are to do what we can: we must seek the blessing of God on our exertions, and leave the event to him. If this statement of duty appear questionable in its largest applica-

tion, it will cease to be so when regard is had to the following particulars.

We are then to observe, that there are certain means conducive to this end, the employment of which cannot, without serious guilt and heavy responsibility, be neglected by any Christian. Not to exert these means must be to violate our obedience; to question their efficacy must be to evince the weakness of our faith; to deny their actual success must be to contradict the voice of history. If the heathen be still unconverted, it will be something at least, that the sin of obstructing their conversion lie not at our door: which it certainly will, if we are guilty of any neglect as to the points which will immediately be brought under our consideration.

First then, the conversion of the heathen is a proper object of prayer. This is plainly required by our religion. It is recognised as such in the form of prayer which our Divine Master has taught us: *Thy kingdom come*. Agreeable to this also are the forms which our church has prescribed for the members of her communion. In them we pray, “that God’s ways
“ may be known upon earth, his saving health among
“ all nations; that he would have mercy upon all
“ Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics; that he would
“ take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart,
“ and contempt of his holy word; and that he would
“ so fetch them home to his flock, that they may be
“ one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ.” What now, is the state of our feelings with regard to such prayers and the blessings they entreat? Are these petitions offered only with the cold formality of the lips?

Or, what is worse, is there, though not avowed even to ourselves, latently at work within us, a cold-hearted philosophical scepticism, generated by the difficulty of reconciling the appointments of providence with the scriptural doctrine respecting the effect of prayer? If there be; we cannot have learned aright the nature and efficacy of prayer, nor can we be sincere in professing our concurrence with the views of our church on that subject. Are our souls inwardly warmed with any portion of that Divine love, which brought our Redeemer down from heaven to rescue us from sin and death? Do we cherish the same compassionate regard for a benighted and a perishing world? Do we, under the influence of these feelings, beg a blessing on the labours of the pious missionary? Do we entreat God that he would open the hearts of the poor heathen, as he once did that of Lydia, that they may receive the word of reconciliation and peace? If we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily, it is time that we should dismiss our wanton speculations, and become more thoughtful of our duties.

God hath reserved to his own disposal the times and seasons when his appointments shall take effect. He has however declared to you the influence of prayer as an effectual means of obtaining the good you desire: and though your petition should not now immediately be granted, your prayer will at least return into your own bosom, and bring a blessing along with it.

In the next place, with respect to us who profess and call ourselves Christians, it is fit to inquire, what is the temper of soul that we carry about us?

What is the character of our daily conversation? Doth our light so shine before men, that when they see our good works, they may, by yielding obedience to his Son and enrolling themselves under his banner, glorify, not us, but our Father which is in heaven? Are the graces of our holy calling discovered in our lives? Do we manifest in our habitual conduct, that active virtue and unblamable holiness, that self-denial and detachment from the world, which may testify the warmth of our charity and the inward purity of our hearts? Do we thus endeavour to recommend the profession of the Gospel, and gain over to it the affections of men?

There are, it is to be feared, but few professors of the Gospel, who can without uneasy feelings apply these questions to themselves. It is difficult indeed to make these observations sensibly felt as a matter of personal application to each individual Christian. To represent to every wicked and careless professor, that he obstructs the progress of the Gospel and the salvation of the unconverted world, may look like an overcharged statement of the guilt which he incurs. The conduct of a single person, it will be said, can in most cases have little influence on the religious faith of distant nations. This may be admitted: but it must, at the same time, be also admitted, that the general corruption of the Christian world has a very great and highly pernicious influence. If this be the case; if the aggregate of wickedness prevailing in the whole visible church be justly considered as the great cause which obstructs the further diffusion of the Gospel: then whoever singly contributes, in whatever degree, to

that aggregate, must be in his proportion chargeable with the consequence of it: and thus will every Christian who walks not worthy of his vocation be justly considered, as personally responsible for the alienation of the heathen from the covenant of God's mercy. In like manner, every act repugnant to the Christian profession; every indulgence of pride, selfishness, malice, and revenge; every breach of charity and justice; must be considered as accessory to the production of the same lamentable effect: since it brings a scandal on the Gospel, generates an unworthy opinion of its character, and thus obstructs its reception.

Here then is a matter of practical obligation suggested by the very subject of our present contemplation. We are most deeply concerned that we take heed to it and to ourselves, since the species of guilt we are now considering is the very same with that which forms the subject of our Lord's awful denunciation: "Woe unto the world because of offences! " for it must needs be that offences come; but woe " to that man by whom the offence cometh^a!"

If any doubt be entertained, whether, in the foregoing observations, the effect has been duly assigned to its proper cause, our judgment as to this point will be materially assisted by attending to the three following propositions. First, the progress of the Gospel has in some instances been obstructed by the wickedness of professing Christians. Secondly, it has in other instances been furthered by the purity and holiness of their lives. Thirdly, the precepts of

^a Matth. xviii. 7.

the Gospel itself are framed on a recognition of the tendencies thus developed by experience.

First, The progress of the Gospel has been in some instances obstructed by the wickedness of professing Christians. To this cause we must ascribe the failure of many pious and charitable exertions for the conversion of the heathen. When the word of eternal life has been conveyed to them, they have turned away from it with repugnance, by reason of the crimes and vices they have witnessed in those by whom the Christian faith was professed. They have seen them in their conduct instigated by cruelty, lust, injustice, and avarice, and have consequently been led to estimate their religion by their actions. Too much occasion for such misconceptions has been furnished, we have reason to fear, by those Europeans who have gone to distant climates in pursuit of wealth.

Secondly, The purity and holiness of professing Christians has in many instances been auxiliary to the progress of their religion. In order to the proof of this position, let us advert to the early history of the Christian church.

It will not be denied by those to whom we now address ourselves, that the Christian religion, in the interval between its first publication and its public establishment in the Roman empire, made a very rapid and extensive progress. Nor will it be contended, that its success was owing to human co-operation or worldly support. The powerful, the great, and the learned, were united in their hostility to it; it furnished no recommendation to the favour of the world; it was commonly assailed with slan-

der, ridicule, and persecution; the confiscation of property, the torture of the body, the infamy of a public execution, were the frequent consequences of embracing it; the liability to these evils was in all cases the prospect which its professors were bound to contemplate. On this fact the greatest stress of argument is justly laid by those who maintain the Divine original of the Gospel.

It will in no degree invalidate this conclusion, but rather strengthen it, if we assert, that the exemplary sanctity of the Christian character in these early ages, constituted a powerful, though subordinate, instrument of accelerating its propagation. It will strengthen the conclusion, I say, because this very sanctity of character ought justly to be viewed as constituting in itself a part of the miraculous evidence of Christianity. It likewise bears testimony, as a proof of sincerity in the early converts, to the reality of the miracles which they professed to regard as the foundation and establishment of their faith.

The evidence in support of this position must necessarily be that of testimony, and must be derived from those authors whose writings illustrate that early period of church history. Among these, we will, in the first place, refer to a statement which we find in the work of a popular ecclesiastical historian. In treating of the causes which contributed to extend the limits of the church in the third century, he says: "The acts of beneficence
" and liberality performed by the Christians, even
" towards persons whose religious principles they

“abhorred, had a great influence in attracting the
 “esteem, and removing the prejudices of many,
 “who were thus prepared for examining with
 “candour the Christian doctrine, and consequently
 “for receiving its divine light. The worshippers
 “of the pagan deities must have been destitute of
 “every generous affection, of every humane feel-
 “ing, if the view of that boundless charity which
 “the Christians exercised towards the poor, the
 “love they expressed even to their enemies, the
 “tender care they took of the sick and infirm, the
 “humanity they discovered in the redemption of
 “captives, and the other illustrious virtues which
 “rendered them so worthy of universal esteem, had
 “not touched their hearts, dispelled their preposses-
 “sions, and rendered them more favourable to the
 “disciples of Jesus ^r.”

But the testimony of writers living within the
 period we have specified, being more authentic, will
 probably be regarded with greater interest and cre-
 dit. We therefore adduce the following extract from
 the first Apology of Justin Martyr, a treatise com-
 posed and addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius
 about the 150th year of the Christian era. In this
 passage, the point which more particularly claims
 our attention is, the striking alteration of charac-
 ter in the Christian converts which is said to have
 ensued on their embracing the faith. “We who
 “heretofore indulged licentious pleasures,” says the

^r Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. III. part i. chap. 1.
 §. 5.

venerable father, “are now devoted to chastity and
“temperance^s. We who formerly exercised magical
“arts, have now dedicated ourselves wholly to the
“good and eternal God. We who loved nothing
“like the acquisition of money and of wealth, now
“contribute all that we have into a common stock,
“and impart to every one who is in want. We who
“were pointed against each other with mutual hatred
“and destruction, and would not so much as warm
“ourselves at the same fire with those of a different
“tribe on account of different institutions, now,
“since the appearing of Christ, live and diet toge-
“ther, and pray for our enemies. With regard to
“those who hate us without a cause, we labour to
“convert them; in order that they, by living up to
“the virtuous precepts of Christ, may be filled with
“comfortable hopes of obtaining the same future
“happiness with ourselves, to be given them by
“that God who is the Lord of all things^t.”

The visible effects of the Christian faith as they were generally discovered in the lives of those who embraced it, are thus described by a writer who lived about the termination of the period to which we refer. “The powerful influence of the Divine
“law on the souls of men, arising from its simpli-
“city and truth, may be seen by daily experience.
“Give me a man who is passionate, reproachful, and
“ungovernable: with a very few divine words, I
“will render him perfectly gentle and tractable.

^s The words of the original are: Οἱ παλαι μεν πορνείαις χαιροντες, νυν δε σωφροσύνην μόνην ασπάζομενοι.

^t Just. Mart. Apol. i. c. 14.

“ Let him be a covetous and griping miser : I will
 “ soon shew him to you exercising liberality, and
 “ dispensing his money abundantly to the needy.
 “ Let him be fearful of suffering death : soon shall
 “ he despise the most frightful tortures which cru-
 “ elty can inflict. Let him be a slave to his lusts
 “ and his licentious passions : soon shall you behold
 “ him adorned with sobriety, chastity, and tempe-
 “ rance. Let him be cruel and bloodthirsty : his fe-
 “ rocity shall soon be changed into real compassion
 “ and tenderness. Let him be unjust, stupid, and
 “ wicked : quickly shall he become equitable, and
 “ wise, and innocent. When once he is washed in
 “ the Christian laver, the malignity of his character
 “ will wholly disappear ^u. ”

But the force of such representations, like the
 shades and colours of a painting, will always be
 heightened by contrast : and the beneficial efficacy
 of a Christian faith will also be best estimated, by a
 comparative regard to the influence of pagan the-
 ology and philosophy, as it was seen, in the same
 ages, to operate on the human character. With this
 view, the words of Lactantius, which almost imme-
 diately follow the last quotation, may fitly be ad-
 duced. After having described, in the manner we
 have seen, the effects of Christianity, he proceeds :
 “ Which of the philosophers ever accomplished these
 “ things, or could accomplish them if he would ?
 “ They spend their lives in the study of philoso-
 “ phy ; but, if nature be at all unfavourable to their
 “ views, they are unable to effect any improvement

^u Lact. Div. Inst. iii. 26.

“ in either others or themselves. And their wisdom, even when most efficacious, consists, not in eradicating vice, but in concealing it from the world ^x.”

How rarely in these times any remarkable crime was discovered in the community of believers, we may judge from two writers who flourished about the beginning of the third century; who declare, that in their time the public gaols of the Roman empire were crowded with pagans, while not a single Christian was to be found there, except such as were imprisoned on account of their religion. To this testimony considerable weight will justly be attached, if we reflect on the large amount of the Christian population of the empire in that age ^y.

The representation of this matter which is given us by Athenagoras is very full and remarkable. This writer was contemporary with Justin Martyr, whose testimony we have already cited. He thus

^x Lact. Div. Inst. iii. 26.

^y Minucius Felix and Tertullian. The words of the former are as follows: “De vestro numero [i. e. ethnicorum] carcer exæstuat: Christianus ibi nullus, nisi aut reus suæ religionis, aut profugus.” Octavius, c. 35. He mentions indeed those who had apostatized from the faith, as well as those who were accused on account of it: but as the former do not belong to the Christian communion, the construction which is given in the text cannot be charged with misrepresentation. Tertullian speaks to the same effect: “De vestris semper æstuat carcer, de vestris semper metalla suspirant, de vestris semper bestię saginantur, de vestris semper munerarii noxiorum greges pascunt. Nemo illic Christianus, nisi hoc tantum, aut si et aliud, jam non Christianus.” Apolog. c. 44.

expresses himself, on a comparative observation of the lives and morals, of those who cultivated the learning of the schools and of those who professed the doctrine of the Gospel. After describing the subtleties of logical disquisition, which formed the chief employment of philosophy in his age, he proceeds to the following effect: “Your philosophers profess by such discourses to conduct their followers to happiness: but who are there among them so purified in soul, as to love their enemies instead of hating them, to bless those who revile them instead of reviling again, (though indeed a simple retaliation of evil words would by such men be esteemed a proof of signal moderation,) and to pray for those who seek the destruction of their lives? These teachers of wisdom are, on the contrary, always actuated by an evil design while they are exploring the mysteries of their art; always bent upon the accomplishment of some wicked purpose: while the art of words, and not the manifestation of a good life, is the object they pursue. But among the Christians, you will meet with the most unlettered characters, manual labourers, and decrepit old women; who, though little able to display in words the advantages of a studious life, will evince in their conduct that beneficial course of action which springs from a rectitude of moral principle. They do not treasure up fine sayings in the memory, but shew forth in their lives the light of a virtuous demeanour: when they are struck, they strike not again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those

“ who ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves ^z.”

Such is the generally concurrent testimony of antiquity respecting that purity of life which characterised the primitive profession of the Gospel. The force of this testimony cannot easily be invalidated. It is derived from writings which boldly challenged the contradiction of adversaries, and is even confirmed by the concurrent attestation of those who vilified and persecuted the Christian name. Of this class was the younger Pliny, whose character of the Christians is quite in unison with the descriptions of the Christian writers themselves: for in his celebrated letter to Trajan, he thus states the result of his inquiry into the conduct and practices of that sect: “ That the whole of their fault, or error, lay in
“ this; that they were wont to meet together on a
“ stated day before it was light, and sing among
“ themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as a God;
“ and to bind themselves by an oath, not that they
“ would commit any kind of wickedness, but that
“ they would not be guilty of theft, or robbery, or
“ adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny
“ a pledge committed to them when called upon to
“ return it: that when these things were performed,
“ it was their custom to separate; and then to come
“ together again to a meal, which they ate in com-
“ mon without any disorder ^a.”

The sanctity of life which thus adorned the profession of the Gospel was spoken of, as constituting in itself a part of the miraculous evidence of the

^z Leg. pro Christianis, c. 11. ^a Plin. Ep. lib. x. 97.

Gospel. A few more citations from the writings of primitive Christianity will serve to illustrate this remark.

Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, refers to two remarkable passages in the prophetical writings of the Old Testament. The first is from Isaiah :
 “ Harken unto me, my people ; and give ear unto
 “ me, O my nation : for a law shall proceed from me,
 “ and I will make my judgment to rest for a light
 “ of the people. My righteousness is near ; my sal-
 “ vation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge
 “ the people : the isles shall wait upon me, and on
 “ mine arm shall they trust^b.” The next is taken
 from Jeremiah : “ Behold, the days come, saith the
 “ Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the
 “ house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : not
 “ according to the covenant that I made with their
 “ fathers in the day that I took them by the hand
 “ to bring them out of the land of Egypt^c.” Having
 cited these passages, he thus reasons in applica-
 tion of them to the existing state of the Christian
 church : “ If God did foretell the introduction of a
 “ new covenant, which was to be for a light to the
 “ Gentiles ; and if we see and are convinced, that
 “ through the name of that very Jesus Christ who
 “ was crucified, men turn from idols and all iniquity

^b Is. li. 4, 5.

^c Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. Justin, in disputing with a Jew, to whom the scriptures of the Old Testament were familiar, may have thought it unnecessary to quote at length the passages to which he refers. The scope of his reasoning would have been more apparent if he had continued this last citation so as to embrace the following verse, and particularly those words, “ I will put my law
 “ in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”

“ to God, and maintain even to death the confession
“ of their faith and their piety : from the perform-
“ ance of these works and the miraculous power
“ which accompanied them, all men may understand,
“ that this is the new law, and the new covenant,
“ and the expectation of those who out of all nations
“ expected to receive the blessings of God ^d.”

The writings of Origen furnish some very remarkable passages in application to this subject. “ If any
“ man,” says he in his reply to Celsus, “ were able to
“ cleanse the souls of men from the defilement of vice,
“ from the incontinence of lust, from iniquity, and
“ from contempt of God ; if he could display the ex-
“ ertion of this talent in reclaiming only a hundred
“ persons : not even such a reformer as this could rea-
“ sonably be thought, without Divine aid, to have in-
“ fused even into that small number of persons the
“ principles which had been effectual to liberate
“ them from so many evil affections. If, on a serious
“ view of this subject, you agree that no good can
“ be effected among men without the aid of God :
“ with how much more confidence may you assert
“ this with respect to Jesus. Examine the former
“ life of many who have come to his word, and com-
“ pare it with the change which ensued. Reflect
“ in what incontinence, injustice, and avarice, each
“ of them lived, until, according to the language of
“ Celsus and his disciples, they were beguiled, and
“ imbibed a doctrine, as they express it, destructive
“ of the happiness of life. Reflect in what manner
“ they have become improved, since they received
“ the doctrine of Christ, in the equity and kindness

^d Dial. cum Tryphone, c. 11.

“ of their dispositions, the virtuous gravity of their
 “ demeanour, and the steady control of every sensual
 “ appetite.—Whoever reflects on these subjects
 “ will find, that Jesus both undertook and effected
 “ more than the nature of man is able to accom-
 “ plish. For though, from the very first, all men
 “ resisted the universal propagation of his word;
 “ though in each age it was opposed by kings, by
 “ their generals and subordinate commanders, by all
 “ who were invested with power, by the magistrates
 “ of every city, the soldiers, and the people; never-
 “ theless it prevailed, because, being the word of
 “ God, it could not be obstructed. It became supe-
 “ rior to all its numerous adversaries; it forced its
 “ reception through the whole of Greece and the
 “ greater part of the rest of the world, and con-
 “ verted numberless souls to that piety and obedi-
 “ ence to God which it dictates^e.” The Divine
 character and power of Christ is again asserted in
 these words: “ The virtue of Jesus was exerted, not
 “ only during the time of his dwelling in the flesh;
 “ but even until now, the power of Jesus worketh
 “ conversion and correction in those who through
 “ him believe in God^f.” The same writer declares,
 that “ the cause of Jesus is best defended by the
 “ lives of his true disciples; since thus the excel-
 “ lency of his doctrine is proclaimed, every calumny
 “ is overpowered, and the Saviour confutes and sub-
 “ verts the false testimonies and accusations of his
 “ enemies^g.”

The force and effect of the reasoning thus pur-

^e Cont. Celsum, i. 26, 27.

^f Ibid. i. 43.

^g Ibid. i. 2.

sued can hardly be disputed. It yields to the general evidence of our faith a powerful auxiliary, of which no friend to Christianity would willingly see it deprived. Certainly the denial of such arguments can scarcely be deemed consistent with the doctrines of our religion. For the inward principle of vital holiness cannot, on any just views of scripture doctrine, be regarded in any other light than as the operation of God's Holy Spirit upon the soul. It is a principle as distinct from any natural influence of human motives or of human reasonings, as that by which the dead are raised to life. For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The natural man is dead in trespasses and sins; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Those things are spiritually discerned, without the knowledge of which the soul of man must be dead to all the purposes of sanctity and salvation.

In a word, if, as Christians, we would maintain consistency of principle, we cannot deny the force of such arguments, nor dispute the advantage which the cause of Christianity derives from them. Let us then apply the consideration to ourselves, and remember, that the argument itself can no further be employed, than as the virtues of a Christian life shall be found subsisting in conjunction with the profession of the Gospel.

The obligation for which we are contending will be further illustrated if we consider, thirdly, that the precepts of the Gospel itself are framed on a recognition of the respective tendencies of a holy and a sinful life as they are developed by experience. This

will be manifest from the following texts. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven^h.” It is required of some, that they “be in behaviour as becometh holinessⁱ,” to others such a conduct is prescribed, that “the word of God be not blasphemed^k,” to others it is urged as a motive of duty, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things^l.” Others are called upon so to demean themselves, that those who obey not the word, may be won by their chaste and submissive conversation^m. “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitationⁿ.” We must endeavour to be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we are to shine as lights in the world^o.”

We see then the course of duty to which, on every recollection of the unconverted world, we should feel ourselves directed. We are not to waste our time in speculative inquiry: still less may we prescribe a line of conduct for the wisdom of our Creator. But we are to mortify our sins and our lusts, that God may be glorified as the giver of that power by which our corruptions are subdued. We are by well doing to recommend the Gospel to the

^h Matt. v. 16. ⁱ Tit. ii. 3. ^k Tit. ii. 5. ^l Tit. ii. 10.

^m 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. ⁿ 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. ^o Phil. ii. 15.

hearts of our fellow-creatures, and to put to silence the ignorance of those who calumniate its sacred truth. We are to beware that its progress, and its due influence, be not obstructed by the sinfulness of our own lives; and that the ignorance and infidelity of those, who still live in estrangement from God, be not chargeable to our account. To the labour of the missionary we are, without compromising any dictate of prudence or discrimination of doctrine, to contribute such encouragement and assistance, as may be adequate to a just estimate of the importance of the work, of the value of human souls, and of our own obligations. Our prayers must entreat from God the hastening of his kingdom; and the tenour of our lives must be framed in agreement with our petitions. This will be a course of action, alike honourable to our profession and beneficial to the world. We may add, that it will also be profitable to ourselves, as a qualification for that reward to which we aspire: since we shall thus lay up a good foundation against the day, when they who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. For then, they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever ^P.

^P Dan. xii. 2, 3.

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS.

The first number denotes the page, and the second the line, to which the reference is made.

12. 11.

HAVING in this and the following pages described the effects which would naturally have resulted from inserting in the law of Moses an explicit statement of the doctrine of a future state; having shewn that the tendency of such an arrangement would have been most unfavourable to the propagation of that religion to which the Law was only preparatory; and having especially enlarged on the prejudices against the Gospel which it would engender in the minds of the Jewish people: we deem it important to add, in relation to the last particular, a consideration, which gives to our deductions a degree of confirmation little less than irresistible.

We are to observe then, that these deductions are not merely supported by abstract reasoning, but the evidence of fact. We admit that the doctrine of a future state is not taught in the Law; and we have said, that if it had been so taught, the consequence would have been to inflame the minds of the Jews with prejudice and hostility against the Gospel. But the Jews maintain that it actually *was* taught. Now the conviction that it was so, would obviously produce the same effect on their minds as the fact itself: since the certainty of a fact, and the undoubting belief of it, will naturally have the same influence on a reasonable being. We shall find then, on examining those sources of information from which only an authentic exposition of their sentiments can be obtained, that while persisting in the rejection of the Gospel, their views are precisely the same with those which, as we have said, they would have been led to entertain by finding the doc-

trine of future rewards and punishments in the pentateuch.

In proof of this, the evidence we produce will, first, illustrate their opinions respecting this doctrine, as they suppose it to be taught in the Law: and, secondly, it will illustrate those other opinions which, as we have said, would have been consequently entertained as deductions from the former.

I. That the doctrine of a future state is believed by the Jews to be the doctrine of their law, will appear from the following authorities.

The first which we shall adduce is that of the historian Josephus, who says explicitly: "Our lawgiver has prophesied, and God himself has pledged his steadfast faith, that to those who fulfil his laws, and are ready, if need be, to die for them, to them God has granted both that they shall return to life again, and obtain a better life from the change^a."

Our next authority shall be that of the rabbi Moses Maimonides. Of all the Jews who have lived since the national dispersion, it is impossible to mention a name more highly estimated by his countrymen. He is familiarly designated among them as the "Doctor of Righteousness," and the "Light of the Captivity." Such indeed is their extravagant veneration for his character, that it surpasses even that with which they regard the prophets of their own canonical scriptures. This will appear from the following testimony to his merits, which has passed into such currency among them as to have become proverbial: "From Moses to Moses, there has arisen none like to Moses^b." That is to say, according to the interpretation of Buxtorf and Pococke^c, *From the time of Moses the lawgiver to that of Moses Maimonides, there has appeared none to be compared with the latter.* These particulars will enable us to estimate the credit to which he is entitled as an expositor of Jewish opinions and doctrines.

In his exposition of the Mishna we find the following passage: "As to the resurrection of the dead, that is the great foundation stone^d of the law of Moses, which if a man believe not, he has neither lot nor place in the reli-

^a Cont. Ap. ii. 30. The words of the original are quoted, page 282 of this work.

^b Buxtorfii Præf. ad More Nevochim.

^c Præf. ad Portam Mosis.

^d Literally, *foundation of foundations*.

“ gion of the Jewse^e. This resurrection belongs only to those who excel in virtue^f.”

This writer (following the example of the Christian church in regard to the Apostles' Creed) drew up a brief confession of faith for the use of his countrymen. It consists of thirteen articles, which are also called *foundations of the Law*. This creed is now in general use among the Jews. The last article contained in it declares *the resurrection of the dead*. And the penal sanction of this, in common with the other articles, is thus declared: “ If any man shall doubt respecting any one of these foundations, he hath deserted the congregation of Israel, and denied the foundation. He is called a heretic, an epicurean, and a tearer up of roots^g. Him it becomes us to hate and to destroy; since of him it is said, *Do not I hate, Lord, them that hate thee*^h?”

Thirdly, the rabbi Judah Zabarah has the following passage: “ You must know that the foundation of our faith concerning the resurrection of the dead, *is from the Law*. Now if any man shall, with a firm faith, believe the resurrection of the dead, but shall not believe that it is a doctrine of the Law, behold, that man, notwithstanding his faith, shall be reckoned as an infidelⁱ.”

After such decided authorities, the production of any other must be needless. We shall, therefore, on the ground of the foregoing citations, feel ourselves authorized to assume the fact, *That the doctrine of a future state was and is believed by the Jews to be a doctrine of their law*.

II. It remains for us to shew the real existence of those erroneous tenets of religion, which, as we have contended, would naturally result from that belief. These tenets, we say, would wholly obstruct the reception of the Christian religion. They are as follows.

1. The doctrine of the Eternity and Unchangeableness of the Law. We have said, that the Jews would be naturally indisposed to embrace a new charter which contained no extension of former privileges^k; and that the most power-

^e It is impossible to conceive what Warburton can have meant when he said, that “ Maimonides saw nothing in the Law but temporal sanctions.” Div. Leg. b. iv. §. 6. vol. iv. p. 362.

^f Pocockii Porta Mosis. Operum vol. i. p. 60.

^g Excindens plantas.

^h Pocock. Ibid. p. 66, 67.

ⁱ Pocockii Notæ Miscellanæ in Portam Mosis. Operum vol. i. p. 163.

^k P. 13.

ful recommendation of the Gospel would have been destroyed by annexing the promise of eternal life to an anterior dispensation¹. This is fully verified in the doctrine of which we now speak. It is thus stated by Maimonides: "It is a foundation of our law, that it will not have "an end nor be abolished for ever: and therefore it also "follows, according to our opinion, that there never was, "nor ever will be, any other law, besides this only law "of Moses our teacher^m." He proceeds to deduce this doctrine from the consideration of the perfection of the Lawⁿ. The scope of the argument is as follows. The Law is perfect, and therefore any dispensation which is substituted in its place, being different from that which is perfect, must itself be imperfect, and therefore unfit to supersede the former^o.

Again he says: "The ninth foundation of the Law is, "that this Law of Moses will not be abrogated, and that "no other than it will be given by God; that nothing will "be added to it, nor taken from it, whether in the text or "the [cabalistic] interpretation^p."

He declares the punishment of a false prophet to be incurred not only by him who shall add to, or diminish from, the Law of Moses, but by him also who should even dare to contradict those cabalistical expositions of the Law which are at variance with its literal and obvious meaning^q. For these cabalistical expositions are by the Jews regarded as equally authoritative with the Law itself, and as a surer guide to its meaning than the words in which it is expressed.

2. The doctrine of Justification by the Works of the Law. We have said, that if the promise of eternal life had been contained in the Law, obedience to that Law would have been viewed as constituting a meritorious title to it^r. This

¹ P. 22.^m More Nev. p. ii. c. 39. p. 301.ⁿ P. 302.

^o Yet the same writer, with remarkable inconsistency, declares in the same work, that the ritual law was, in great part, grounded on the circumstances of the age in which it was given; and admits that those circumstances are so far changed, that even the knowledge of them had not come down to his time. His words are as follows: "Omnia præcepta, tam negativa quam affirmativa, quorum nobis ratio est occulta, nihil aliud sunt, quam "remedia et medicinæ morborum quorundam illius temporis, quæ ad nostram "scientiam (Deo sit laus) non pervenerunt." More Nev. p. iii. c. 49. p. 508. It remains to be shewn how a code which was framed with a regard to changeable circumstances can, with relation to altered circumstances, maintain an unchangeable perfection.

^p Porta Mosis, p. 66.^q Ibid. p. 13.^r P. 12.

doctrine we shall also find to have been entertained in conjunction with the belief that such promise was contained in the Law. The evidence of this point, supplied by the Epistles of St. Paul, especially those to the Romans and Galatians, is so full and decisive, as to supersede the necessity of adducing further proof from the Jewish writers. A few particulars, however, relating to it will be found highly deserving of remark: since they explain the nature of this antichristian doctrine, as entertained by the Jews, and also illustrate the extent to which it has been carried. First then we are to observe, that the rule of justification thus proposed embraces no regard to the spiritual obedience of man, but limits its control to the outward actions: the thoughts of the heart being viewed, generally speaking, as incapable of criminality in the eye of God. Witness David Kimchi's exposition of the following verse from the Psalms: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me^s:" these last words, *the Lord will not hear me*, being interpreted by that celebrated rabbi to signify, *the Lord will not impute it to me as wickedness*; "for God," says he, "regards not an evil thought in the light of a deed, unless such thought be conceived against his own faith and religion^t." Secondly, the same rule, as understood by the same people, prescribed only a partial and very limited obedience, as all that was necessary to satisfy the demands of Divine justice. Thus the Jewish doctors declare, that the multitude of their commandments was given, that they might select out of them those which they best liked to observe, and by such obedience merit eternal life^u. "Whoever," says Obadiah de Bartenora, in an exposition of the Mishnical doctrine, "shall sincerely observe even any one of the 613 precepts [of the Law], behold he by fulfilling that precept shall merit eternal life^x." The Mishna also itself, as quoted by Bull, says, "Whosoever shall observe any one precept, it shall be well with him, and his days shall be perpetuated, and he shall possess the land^y."

Such principles, we may observe after Bull^z, would have a natural tendency to coalesce with the pharisaical character described in the Gospel: in which minute observances are fastened upon as the ground of acceptance with the Deity, while the weightier matters of the Law are omitted.

^s Ps. lxxvi. 18.

^u Bull. Ibid. §. 7.

^y Quoted Ibid. §. 8.

^t Quoted from Bull, Harm. Ap. Diss. II. c. 16. §. 6.

^x Quoted as above, §. 7.

^z Harm. Ap. Diss. II. c. 16.

The same principles may also be reasonably viewed, as having, in part at least, furnished the occasion of those numerous passages in the New Testament, in which we find our Lord and his apostles, in that emphatic style which indicates the prevalence of a contrary doctrine, strongly inculcating the necessity of an impartial conformity, both of heart and life, to the whole will of God. They will also assist in explaining the proper notion of that legal justification which was so much insisted on by the Jewish and Judaizing adversaries of St. Paul; and will illustrate the necessity that apostle was under of rectifying so gross a misconception by teaching, as he did, that such justification could not be obtained without an exact and universal fulfilment of the whole Law.

A passage in Maimonides, though it does not insist upon a personal righteousness as the ground of justification, contains a principle not undeserving of our notice; since it is equally inconsistent with the doctrine of Christianity on that subject: "This also is one of the fundamental principles of our Law, that all the good which God has done, or will do, to us, is done on account of the merit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they kept the way of the Lord by doing justice and judgment^a."

3. The doctrine of the real efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices. This would naturally be associated with the doctrine to which we last adverted. Thus, that which was only an appointed means of grace, a figure for the time then present, and an emblem of the sacrifice of Christ, was exalted into a perfect satisfaction for sin, and an adequate ransom for souls. On this view it is plain, that the pretensions of the Gospel must have been inadmissible, and the doctrine of Christ crucified would naturally be, what it eventually proved, a stumblingblock to the Jews. That this doctrine was really entertained in our Saviour's time by the Jews, and that it actually presented a great obstruction to the Gospel, will be sufficiently manifest from the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we find St. Paul declaring that "such sacrifices can never make the comers thereunto perfect," and "that the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin^b." On which we may observe, that such strong and repeated assertions, together with the reasonings by which they are supported, to the

^a More Nev. p. iii. c. 43. p. 472.

^b Heb. x. 1, 4.

effect of representing the inadequacy of those sacrifices to the purpose of remission, may be regarded as sufficient evidence that the contrary opinions were prevalent among his countrymen. It will not here be necessary to detail the opinions of the modern Jews in relation to this subject^c: since it cannot with candour be denied that they declare to the fullest extent the efficacy of their sacrifices for the expiation of guilt. This being admitted, it must necessarily follow, that it was a *real and intrinsic*, and not merely a *sacramental*, efficacy which they ascribed to them: since the universal sentiments of their nation discard the notion of any more precious sacrifice than those prescribed by their Law; and they do not admit the idea of any more perfect and sufficient satisfaction for sin, from a reference to which their legal sacrifices derive their whole value as the appointed means of reconciliation with God.

4. We have said, that, if eternal life had been the sanction of the Mosaic Law, then obedience to that Law would have been regarded as a sufficient qualification for it^d. This opinion also is found to subsist in union with the persuasion that it was so: and we are to observe, that the obedience to which this value was attached, was a ritual, not a spiritual, obedience; in other words, that kind of obedience which sufficed to qualify the Jew to maintain his privilege as a member of the covenant and commonwealth of Israel, and which only just fell short of apostasy. We have also stated among the natural consequences of such a sanction, that all but the subjects of the Mosaic economy would have been regarded as shut out from the benefit of immortal life^e. This in like manner was an actual result of the same persuasion. The two opinions will be found contained together in the following doctrine of the Jews: namely, that the happiness of a future and eternal life would be the portion of every Israelite, and would be denied to all the rest of mankind. In support of this assertion we shall now produce the necessary evidence.

The Mishna says, "Every Israelite will have his portion in a future life^f:" that is, in a state of future and eternal reward. This is qualified by a very few exceptions, which, indeed virtually, are none at all: since they

^c A collection of them will be found in Outram de Sacr. l. i. cc. 20. 22. and in Magee on Atonement, Diss. xxxiii.

^d P. 12.

^e P. 168.

^f Tract. Sanhedrin. c. 10. Quoted in the Porta Mosis, page 52.

appear to be grounded on those transgressions, which, according to the doctrine of the Rabbins, amounted to apostasy from the profession of the Law, and justified the excommunication of the offenders.^g

The Talmud says, "Abraham sits near the gates of hell, and suffers not any wicked Israelite to go down to hell^h."

Maimonides declares the same doctrine, *audacter ac rotunde*, as Bull expresses himself. "All wicked [Israelites]," says he, "whose sins are more abundant than their good works, will be judged according to the excess of their evil above their good deeds; and after that they will have their portion in the future life: because all Israelites shall have their portion in the future lifeⁱ."

"Certainly," says Manasseh Ben Israel, "this ought to be an argument of powerful influence with all Israelites, to avoid excessive lamentation for the dead; because it is certain, that every Israelite shall exchange this life for a better^k."

It may not be uninteresting to subjoin to the foregoing authorities a quotation from Justin Martyr: since it will at once display the nature, and prove the antiquity of the doctrine, maintained by the Jewish church on this subject. He thus, in his discourse with Trypho, describes the doctrine of the Jewish teachers, with which, as Bull observes, he was perfectly well acquainted. Having observed, that the Jews were not able to drink from the living fountain of God, but only from broken cisterns which hold no water, he thus proceeds: "These broken cisterns, which hold no water, are those which your own Rabbins have hewn out for you: as the scripture also expressly says, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*. And moreover,

^g The passage in the Latin version of the original is as follows: "Omni Israelitæ in futuro seculo sors est, sicut dictum est, Et populus tuus omnes justi in æternum possidebunt terram. Hi tamen ex Israelitis vitæ æternæ exsortes erunt: Qui negat in vitam revocandos esse mortuos: legem esse e cœlo: Epicureus. R. Alkiba ait: Is quoque qui libros extraneos legit: qui adsusurrit plagæ hæc verba: *Omnem morbum quem imposui Ægyptiis, non imponam tibi. Nam ego Dominus medens tibi*. [Ex. xv. 26.] Abba Schaül ait: Is quoque, qui nomen [tetragrammaton] suis literis pronunciat." The difficulties contained in the above citation are explained in the treatise of Abarbanel, de Capite Fidei, c. 24.

^h Quoted by Munster, and from him by Bull, Harm. Apost. Diss. II. c. 17. §. 6.

ⁱ Tract. de Pœnitentia, c. 3. Bulli Harm. ibid.

^k De Res. Mort. I. x. §. 11.

“they deceive themselves and you, while they suppose, “that the eternal kingdom will certainly be given to those “sprung from the seed of Abraham according to the “flesh, even though they be sinners, and infidels, and dis- “obedient to God¹.”

It remains for us to shew, that eternal salvation was, according to the same doctrine, restricted to the individuals of the Jewish nation. This indeed might seem only a necessary and reasonable deduction from that other tenet, which prescribes the observance of the Mosaic law as the indispensable condition of eternal life, and of which such frequent mention occurs in the writings of St. Paul. We will proceed to illustrate from the authority of Jewish writers the manner in which this dogma has been entertained and taught by them.

The Mishna says, “He who is not circumcised will inherit hell^m.” Juda Zabarah says, “that the resurrection will be peculiar to the Israelites, and that the Gentiles will not partake in it. This, says he, is agreeable to reason; for the whole world was created for the sole benefit of Israel. Our wise men have said: To him who spoke the word, and the world was made, it was well known that Adam would sin; why then did he create Adam? Because a nation in whom he found refreshment (i. e. the Israelites,) would come from him. Our wise men have also said: When the serpent came to Eve, he infused into her his defilement, (by which is to be understood evil concupiscence;) and therefore her posterity were doomed to death. From the Israelites, who

¹ Dial. cum Tryph. c. 140. Quoted also by Bull, Harm. Ap. Diss. II. c. 17. §. 17.

^m Quoted by Abarbanel. The passage from whence this quotation is taken may not improperly be here inserted at length, by reason of the agreement, as to various points, with those opinions which it is our purpose to describe. It is as follows:

“Dico autem ad solutionem istorum,” (sc. dubiorum quæ prius dicta fuerant,) “istud Misnæ indicare nobis; quemlibet Israelitam sive pauperem, sive divitem, in præceptis, habiturum partem in futuro seculo: quia, cum præstat aliquod præceptum, quod est in potestate ejus, merebitur summum spirituale præmium. Sic enim aiunt cap. 1. Hanoda Zara fol. 17. ad istum, qui quærebat, Quisnam futurus sum in vita futuri seculi? Responderunt: Venitne aliquod præceptum a manu tua? ad indicandum, quod præstando unicum præceptum, sicuti decet, acquirat vitam futuri seculi: adeo ut in traditione eorum Hirurin, cap. 2. fol. 19. extet his verbis; Qui non est circumcisis gehennam hæreditabit. Ac propterea dicunt: Quilibet Israelita habebit partem in futuro seculo; atque est generale statutum de omnibus populis, quod vid. omnis, qui appellatur nomine Israelis, merebitur vitam spiritualem.” Abarbanel de Capite Fidei, cap. 24. p. 114. e versione Vorstii, Amstel. 1638.

“ stood at the foot of mount Sinai, that is, who received
 “ the Law, which is the tree of life, this defilement was
 “ taken away, and they were thus made fit for eternal life :
 “ the Gentiles, who were not present there, were not
 “ cleansed from this defilement, and therefore are unfit for
 “ life. The resurrection is therefore wholly confined to
 “ the Israelites ⁿ. ”

Abarbanel declares it to be a doctrine sanctioned by many of the rabbins, *that the benefit of the resurrection will be confined to the righteous among the Israelites*. As authorities for this doctrine he mentions the names of Maimonides^o, Saadiah, and Chasdai; and it is founded upon a saying which occurs in their traditions, *That the rain of heaven is a common benefit to all men, but the resurrection of the dead pertains only to the righteous*^p.

We are not however to disguise the difference of opinion which occurs among the rabbins on this subject. Thus the doctrine of Juda Zabarah, as stated above, is laid down only as a general rule, with an admission of some exceptions in favour of the pious among the Gentiles. This qualification is stated on the authority of Rabbi Judah the Saint who compiled the Mishna^q. Indeed it is a received maxim with some of the rabbins, *That the pious among the Gentiles will have their portion in the future life*. By the pious, we are by some of the Jewish doctors taught to understand, those who observe the seven precepts, which, according to the Rabbinical traditions, were delivered by God to Noah^r. Menasseh ben Israel also quotes a book of high authority with his nation, in which it is declared, that great happiness in a future world will be the portion of those who have shewn kindness to the Israelites in their captivity^s. To pursue the detail of these opinions further would not indeed be devoid of general interest, but would lead us beyond the limits prescribed by our immediate purpose. It will suffice to have adduced those authorities

ⁿ Pocock. Notæ Misc. p. 194.

^o Maimonides is alleged by Menasseh ben Israel (de Res. p. 184.) as maintaining the contrary doctrine. The work referred to in both cases is his Epistle on the Resurrection.

^p Pocock. Notæ Misc. p. 192.

^q Ibid. p. 194.

^r Men. ben Is. de Res. II. 9. p. 183. The seven precepts are as follows :
 1. Thou shalt not worship an idol. 2. Thou shalt not kill. 3. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 4. Thou shalt not blaspheme the name of God. 5. Thou shalt not steal. 6. Thou shalt not eat the limb of a living animal. 7. Thou shalt appoint judges to take care that these foregoing precepts be well and diligently observed.

^s De Res. Mor. II. 9. p. 126.

which prove, that the principle which excludes the Gentiles from the hope of future salvation, is, in its general application, a principle which has obtained considerable currency among the doctrines of modern Judaism.

With regard however to the exceptions of *the pious among the Gentiles*, it will not be amiss to notice a specimen of rabbinical doctrine, which may assist in framing an estimate of the *standard* of piety to which they annex so important a distinction from the general doom. Some of the Jewish doctors exclude from the hope of eternal life all who are ignorant of the Law; that is, not only the Gentiles who are unacquainted with the Mosaic institutions, but also the uninstructed rabble of their own countrymen. "This people," said the Pharisees in our Lord's time, "who knoweth not the law are cursed^t." This rule however is not laid down without exceptions in favour of those who have contracted some intimate alliance or connexion with the disciples of the wise: as for instance, if a man has given his daughter, with a large dowry, to one of them in marriage; or if he has carried on a trade, giving the profits of it to them, in order that they may thus be enabled to adhere to the study of the Law without distraction! In such cases, say they, the same righteousness will be imputed to them, as if they had themselves been ever so much devoted to the immediate service of God. We must at least agree with Pococke^u, from whom we have taken the above description, in designating this as a doctrine highly beneficial to the preacher. "Quanti doctorum inter-
" esset hoc a vulgo serio credi!"

Having thus illustrated the doctrines of the synagogue in regard to these four important subjects, we find in them a most exact correspondence, or rather identity, with those opinions which we said would naturally be generated by the doctrine of eternal life in the Law. As the notion of that doctrine being contained in the Law is declared to be the most fundamental of all Jewish articles of faith, it will not be unreasonable to regard such opinions as a superstructure raised upon that foundation. They are, in truth, nothing but natural and necessary steps in the progress of error. We have seen that the Eternity of the Law is deduced from its supposed perfection. Now this perfection could never have been ascribed to it, if the truth were once admitted respecting its omission of a future state. The

^t John vii. 49.

^u Notæ Misc. p. 195.

Law could not in that case have been regarded as a *perfect* dispensation, but must have been estimated according to its true character, *as the part of a dispensation progressively advancing to that perfection which it was destined afterwards to reach*. Thus would it have operated, agreeably to its design, as an introduction to the Gospel. But how the Gospel could possibly be received consistently with the entertainment of those doctrines which we have just reviewed, it is impossible to explain. "If," as an ancient writer justly remarks, "the Law of Moses had been competent to give eternal life, in vain did the Saviour himself come into the world and suffer for us^x." A new covenant was plainly inadmissible to those who believed that the old was perfect, eternal, and unchangeable. The meritorious sacrifice of the Cross could never be an article of faith with those, who ascribed to the Levitical sacrifices that efficacy which belongs to the former only. The faith of a Redeemer could not be admitted as the prescribed condition of man's justification, by those who thought, that man could be justified before his Maker on account of the works of the Law, and who imagined that a ritual, a defective, and a partial observance of those works was sufficient for the attainment of eternal life. Lastly, the Messiah could not be received as the author of eternal salvation, without respect of persons, to all who come unto him: he could not, I say, be received in this character by those, who supposed that the benefit of eternal life was by the divine decree, limited, with few exceptions, to the seed of Jacob.

In regard then to these particulars, as we find them connected with the person and doctrine of our Redeemer, it is plain that Jesus could not, by those whom we have described, have been received as the promised Messiah. But as the Jews did and do expect a Messiah, it will be worth our while to examine the characters and qualities which, in agreement with the errors we have already detailed, they ascribe to him and to his kingdom, as the subjects of their expectation. For this is not the least remarkable part of that system of erroneous doctrine which they connect with their belief in a future state as the doctrine of their Law: and the exposition of it will strengthen our conviction of the total repugnance between the truths of the Gospel, and the doctrines which were certainly combined with, and, as we should say, grafted upon, that

^x Clem. Alex. in libro, "Quis dives salvetur?" c. 8.

fatal mistake respecting the sanction of the Law. Thus will it also satisfy us, that the Gospel could never be embraced while these errors were retained.

We have seen, then, that the Messiah could not be expected by the Jews, as possessing any of those leading characters which essentially belong to his office in the evangelical scheme. He could not be expected as the Mediator of a New Covenant, because the Old was supposed to be eternal and unalterable; nor as a priest to intercede, because the priesthood of the sons of Aaron was regarded as adequate to the purpose; nor as a victim to die, because, according to the same scheme, the legal sacrifices had the real power and virtue of expiation in themselves; nor as the meritorious procurer of eternal life, because a ritual and a very defective obedience to the Law was viewed as constituting in itself a meritorious title to that blessing. An observation of these circumstances will prepare us for any thing wild and extravagant which may occur in the notions they formed to themselves of the promised Redeemer of Israel.

“As to the days of the Messiah,” says Maimonides^z, “that is the time, when the kingdom will be restored to Israel, and the Israelites will return to Palestine. The Messiah will be a powerful king: Zion will be the metropolis of his kingdom: his name will be illustrious and will fill the utmost parts of the earth with its renown: he will be greater and richer than Solomon: the nations will enter into peace with him, and the provinces will yield obedience to him, on account of his distinguished righteousness, and of the miracles which he will perform. If any man shall rise up in rebellion against him, God will destroy that man and deliver him into his hand. Moreover, all the texts of scripture declare both the felicity of the Messiah himself, and that which we (the Jews) shall obtain through him. But there will be no change in the nature of things from the state which now prevails, except that the kingdom will be with Israel. So our wise men have expressly said, ‘There is no difference between the present age and the days of the Messiah, except only the subjugation of the kingdoms.’ And under his dominion, some will be stronger, and

^y Another description of the Messiah is given by Basnage from the same Maimonides, in which it is said, that the Messiah will not work miracles. *Hist. des Juifs*, l. v. c. 13. §. 3.

^z *Porta Mosis*, p. 60.

“ some weaker than others. But in those days men will
 “ enjoy a remarkable facility of obtaining food, so that a
 “ man will be able to obtain great riches with the least
 “ possible trouble. This is the meaning of the saying,
 “ ‘ It will be that the land of Israel will bring forth sweet
 “ cakes and silk garments.’ (For it is proverbial with us
 “ to say respecting a man who finds any thing with little
 “ trouble : ‘ Such a man has found his bread ready baked,
 “ and his meat ready dressed.)’ ” Maimonides proceeds
 to censure those by whom the above saying was under-
 stood, according to its literal import, to signify that such
 would actually be the vegetable productions of the earth ;
 in opposition to whom he says, that the labours of agricul-
 ture will still be continued under the Messiah, and alleges
 in proof of both their continuance and their facility to the
 people of his nation, the following words of Isaiah^z :
 “ The sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your
 “ vinedressers.” He then resumes his description after
 the following manner : “ But the great felicity of that time
 “ will be, that we shall then be liberated from the yoke of
 “ that evil dominion, which keeps us back from the pursuit
 “ of every virtue ; and that knowledge will then be multi-
 “ plied, as God hath said, ‘ For the earth shall be filled
 “ with the knowledge of the Lord^a ;’ and that then conten-
 “ tions and wars shall be done away, as he hath also said,
 “ ‘ Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation^b.’ For
 “ to them who live at that time shall be granted a full en-
 “ joyment of every advantage^c by which they may attain
 “ to the life of a future world. But the Messiah will
 “ die, and his son and his posterity will reign after him.
 “ For that he will die God declares (when he says), ‘ He
 “ shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he set judgment in
 “ the earth^d.’ But his reign will be of very long dura-
 “ tion, and men will then attain great length of life. For
 “ life is prolonged by the removal of grief and sorrow.
 “ And it is certainly true, that his reign will last for some
 “ thousands of years. For it is said, ‘ The coalition of
 “ society among the good cannot easily be dissolved.’ But
 “ the days of the Messiah are not so much to be desired,
 “ either that our corn and wealth may be multiplied, or
 “ that we may ride on horses, and drink together to the
 “ sound of musical instruments, (as they think who are

^z Isaiah lxi. 5.^a Hab. ii. 14.^b Mic. iv. 3.^c Literally, that great perfection, by which &c.^d Isaiah xlii. 4.

“ confounded in their understanding) : but the prophets
 “ have wished for, and excellent men have eagerly ex-
 “ pected, those days, on account of that society of good
 “ men, that virtuous conversation and knowledge, which
 “ will then prevail, and on account of the righteousness of
 “ the king [Messiah], and his distinguished knowledge,
 “ and the near degree in which he is related to his Creator,
 “ as God hath said to him, ‘ Thou art my Son^e :’ and be-
 “ cause the whole Law of Moses will then be fulfilled with-
 “ out reluctance, perturbation, or constraint ; as he hath
 “ promised, ‘ They shall not teach every man his neigh-
 “ bour, for they shall all know me, from the great of them
 “ unto the little of them^f :’ and ‘ I will put my law in
 “ their heart^g :’ and ‘ I will take the stony heart out of
 “ your flesh^h.’ ”

The above description may be considered as a just re-
 presentation of prevailing and popular notions entertained
 among the modern Jews respecting the person and dispen-
 sation of their expected Messiah. The high reputation of
 Maimonides as an expositor of Jewish doctrines will jus-
 tify this estimate of it. We ought not at the same time to
 deny the existence among the doctors of the synagogue of
 various and contradictory opinions in relation to this sub-
 ject. The detail of such opinions is given at considerable
 length in Basnage’s History of the Jewsⁱ. To enumerate
 and describe them further would be useless to our present
 purpose^k. It will suffice to remark one general quality
 pervading the whole of them : namely, their inconsistency
 with those views, which, as we have said, essentially cha-

^e Psalm ii. 7.

^f Jer. xxxi.

^g Ibid.

^h Ezek. xi. 19.

ⁱ Liv. v. c. 10, 11, 12, 13.

^k Some particulars, however, relating to these opinions seem too important
 to be omitted. With regard to the qualifications of a prophet, the Jews en-
 tertain the following doctrine : “ The spirit of prophecy,” say the rabbins,
 “ does not dwell except in a man who is wise, powerful, and rich.” Maim.
 Mor. Nev. p. 285. Porta Mosis, pp. 14, 83. In the latter of the places re-
 ferred to, *powerful* is interpreted to signify *him who subdues his lusts*, and
rich to have the same meaning with *contented*. If we acquiesce in such in-
 terpretations, there is at least reason to complain of the employment of lan-
 guage which, without a farfetched exposition, necessarily leads to dangerous
 misconception on a subject so important as the discrimination of true and
 false prophets. Again : It is declared by Maimonides to be a fundamental
 principle of the Law, “ That temporal dispensations of happiness and misery
 “ are wholly, even to the minutest particulars, determined by God according
 “ to the merit or the sin of those whom they befall.” More Nev. p. iii. c. 17.
 p. 380. See also cc. 18. and 24. p. 385, 406. It is obvious that these rab-
 binical doctrines, when applied to the person of our Redeemer, must neces-
 sarily contribute to lead the Jews far away from all correct notions of the
 Messiah.

racterize the evangelical scheme relating to the person and the office of our Redeemer. It is only important to us to observe, that such opinions are entertained by those who believe the doctrine of a future state to be the doctrine of the Mosaic law : since the opinions themselves discover that contradiction and hostility to the Gospel, which we have said that it would be the tendency of that belief to generate, and thus would naturally alienate the minds of the Jews from that dispensation, of which the subsequent introduction was contemplated and provided for in the promulgation of the Law.

Lastly, It is important to observe, that although the doctrine of a future life is maintained by the Jews to be a part of the Law of Moses, it is nevertheless admitted by many of the Jews to have been therein delivered only in an obscure and indirect manner. It will not be uninteresting to inquire into the reasons they assign for its not being taught more explicitly. Our own reason for the omission of this doctrine is derived from a comparative regard to the genius of the two dispensations, the Law and the Gospel: the latter affording, by the atonement of a Redeemer, that means of human justification which the former does not provide. By the Jews, it is plain, that such a reason cannot be admitted ; as it is also certain that the fact of omission, which it proposes to explain, is denied by them. They admit however, that the important doctrine is taught in the Pentateuch only in an obscure manner. We now therefore proceed to examine the explanations they offer relating to the obscurity of its deliverance. A review of these explanations will make us sensible of the difficulty, of providing any real solution at variance with that which we have proposed. It will also enable us more fully to perceive the weakness of those considerations with which they are ready to satisfy themselves, rather than admit the imperfect character and temporary design of their Law.

It is contended by Manasseh ben Israel, " that though " the fundamental and essential article concerning the " resurrection of the dead cannot be demonstratively " proved from the books of Moses, it may however be " deduced from them in the way of probable inference^k." But as it is contended by the Sadducees and others that

^k " Ex his omnibus liquet, loca nonnulla in libris Mosaicis reperi, ex " quibus licet apodicticis demonstrationibus fundamentalis et essentialis arti- " culus de resurrectione mortuorum probari non possit : verisimiliter tamen " ex iis evincitur." Lib. i. c. 1.

the sanction of the Law is only temporal; and that the doctrine of a future life is in the highest degree improbable, because the Law makes no mention of it: he feels himself called upon to explain the reasons why this doctrine is not clearly and openly propounded in the Law.

In order to this, he presents to his reader an account of the several opinions which have been given upon the subject by the eminent doctors of the synagogue who had treated the matter before him. Of the most remarkable of these opinions we proceed to give an abstract¹.

The first is that of Maimonides, who says, that the rewards and punishments of a future life are not certainly and specifically declared in the Law, because it is the will of God, that love, and not the hope of a reward, should be the motive of our service: and that the blessings annexed by the Law to obedience are designed only as helps to the attainment of eternal life, in the way of liberating the mind from that distraction by which men would otherwise be drawn aside in their progress to it. The same doctor gives a different explanation of the matter as follows. All the prophets have clearly foretold the blessings of the Messiah's reign, because they clearly understood the nature of them: but respecting the glorified state of the soul they have been silent, because they could not mentally apprehend them, and it would have been wrong to extenuate the felicity of that state by faint and inadequate descriptions.

Our next explainer is Aben Ezra. He says, that the reward of a future life cannot without much difficulty be comprehended; that the Law was given, not for the wise only, but also for the vulgar and ignorant; in adapting its provisions to the capacities of the latter, those rewards were therefore chosen for a sanction, which all could understand; but that the nature of immortal happiness was a recondite doctrine, which the wise and learned were to gather from various passages of it.

The rabbis Bahye the Elder and Moses Gerundensis have treated the matter with a ridiculous ingenuity. They teach, that the immortal happiness of the soul is an effect of nature and necessity, insomuch that many who were strangers to the Law, have attained a conviction of it by the mere exercise of their natural reason; that the Law

¹ They are taken from his treatise *De Res. Mort.* I. c. 13.

has therefore made no mention of it, because it promises those things which exceed the order of nature, and take effect only by the interposition of a special providence: for of this latter character were the rewards and punishments dispensed under the theocracy of Israel.

The last mentioned rabbi proposes another solution of the question, in which he has the concurrence of Joseph Albo. It is as follows. Eternal rewards belong not to the Law, because they are to be awarded on a personal regard to the actions of individuals; whereas the sanctions of the Law applied universally to the nation at large, or at least collectively to distinct portions or bodies of it. Thus, if the majority of the people were obedient to the Law, the whole would enjoy the reward which the Law promises, and the wicked would participate with the good: if the majority were transgressors, the whole would be punished, and the good would be involved in the suffering of the wicked.

The next explanation seems to be that of Menasseh himself. He supposes that temporal rewards and punishments were chosen as the sanction of the Law in order to secure a more extensive obedience, because they have commonly more influence on the conduct of mankind than future; temporal and sensible enjoyments being for the most part more inviting than those which are distant and spiritual.

There are two remaining explanations, which are certainly more respectable than those which we have already seen. Their value consists however rather in explaining why the temporal sanction was employed, than why the future was omitted. The first is that of the rabbis Nissim, Joseph Albo, and Judah the Levite. The purport of it is, that temporal sanctions were employed for the purpose of reclaiming or preserving men from idolatry: since the reality and supremacy of the true God were thus discovered by special and regular manifestations of his power; a purpose for which the rewards of a future and invisible world would have been in no degree available. The evidence of a providence being thus supplied, the expectation of future rewards for the righteous would, it is contended, be the natural consequence resulting from the belief of it.

The other explanation is that of the rabbi Saadiah, and is similar to the last, as well as concurrent in purport with

a quotation from Maimonides, which we shall afterwards have occasion to adduce^m.

23. 6.

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” Deut. iv. 2. The purport of these words appears to be nothing else than a prohibition of interpolating or mutilating the text of the written law, or of making any additions to it after the manner of those cabalistical traditions, to which, though they sometimes plainly contradict the written law, the Jews have ascribed an authority equal to it. Warburton, however, seems disposed to deduce from it the unlawfulness of believing a future state, because that doctrine is not expressly taught in the Law. The absurdity of this interpretation can only be equalled by that of another writer, who was the subject of great and undue admiration with that distinguished prelate; I mean Maimonides, who so alleges the same words in proof of the eternal and unchangeable nature of the Law, as must at once, if his construction of them be admitted, be decisive against the pretensions of Christianityⁿ.

24. 20. and 25. 10.

With regard to the two classes of persons here mentioned by Warburton as supporters of the doctrine opposed to his own, I think it important to offer a few remarks.

The first are the ancient Christian writers. Whether they can justly be said to *have held the doctrine of a future state to be the most essential part of the Mosaic Law*, is I think more than doubtful. The true state of the case will, if I mistake not, after due examination, prove to be as follows: namely, that they held this doctrine to be both recognised and countenanced, but not explicitly and directly taught, in the Pentateuch: and this I hold to have been also the constant opinion of all moderate and impartial persons. Considerable allowance must of course be made, in a statement of this kind, for that great diversity of character which occurs in the writers thus referred to: but I think it would be difficult to produce a single passage from the catholic writers of the early centuries of the Christian

^m Suppl. Rem. on page 153. l. 25.

ⁿ Por. Mos. p. 66.

church which can be fairly construed into a proof of the contrary.

The second class are the unbelieving Jews : with regard to whom the statement of Warburton appears to be true to its fullest extent. The existence of this opinion among them is sufficiently proved by the testimonies we have lately adduced ; and its antiquity will be equally apparent from a remarkable passage in Josephus, which we quoted on a former occasion^o. The nature of the proofs which they offer in support of this opinion is well deserving of our attention : since we shall thus be enabled to estimate the truth and justice of the charge which has been brought against them, of doing violence to the sacred text for the purpose of eliciting from it this important doctrine.

Among the scriptural passages which they allege from the Pentateuch for this purpose, the following are some of the most remarkable.

Maimonides professes to establish the doctrine of future rewards on these words : “ That it may go well with thee, “ and that thou mayest prolong thy days^p.” But he confesses that they are not available for his purpose without the aid of cabalistical interpretation^q.

Another text adduced by the same writer^r, is the following : “ Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin : and if not, “ blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast “ written. And the Lord said unto Moses, *Whosoever “ hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my “ book^s.*”

“ And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, “ to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he “ might preserve us alive, as it is at this day^t.” These words are understood by Maimonides to express both the temporal and eternal reward of obedience^u.

^o Pages 282 and 392.

^p Deut. iv. 40. The whole verse is as follows : “ Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, “ that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that “ thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God “ giveth thee, for ever.”

^q “ Hoc est quod dixit Deus, *Ut bene sit tibi, et prolonges dies* : cujus “ dicti explicationem traditione accepimus, *Ut bene sit tibi, in seculo quod “ totum est bonum, et prolonges dies, in seculum quod totum est longum.*” Por. Mos. pp. 58, 59.

^r Por. Mos. p. 66.

^s Exod. xxxii. 32, 33.

^t Deut. vi. 24.

^u The application of them to this subject will be best understood from his own words : “ Ejus, quod hic ait, *Ut bene sit nobis omnibus diebus*, sensus est,

The rabbi Tanchum builds on the foundation of these words: "Which if a man do, he shall live in them^x." He also cites the authority of Onkelos, who thus paraphrases them: "Which if a man do, he shall through them have eternal life; quæ si fecerit homo, vivet per ea vita æterna^y."

The rabbi Simon ben Iohay deduces the resurrection of the dead from these words: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return^z." Of this text he gives the following paraphrase: "Thou art now dust, O Adam, and with that dust thou shalt again be clothed at the time of the resurrection of the dead^a!"

The rabbi Simai professes to give an evident demonstration of the resurrection from the promise of God that he would give the land of Canaan to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob^b: for it is to be observed that the promise is not only to the seed of Abraham, but to Abraham himself^c. Now as Abraham did not possess that land, it is contended that a resurrection must be necessary in order to realize the promise^d.

We need not proceed further in the citation of texts and arguments, since the above will answer every purpose as a specimen of the whole. Those who wish to pursue the inquiry further will find a long enumeration of texts in Warburton^e, and a number of scriptural citations, together with the reasonings which have been framed upon them by the eminent doctors of the Jewish nation, in the treatise of Menasseh ben Israel on the Resurrection^f.

It would be a waste of time to remark, what must occur to every mind not blinded with religious delusion, the very defective nature of the arguments thus offered. The learned Jew to whom we last referred is compelled to acknowledge, that the passages which he has cited from the Pentateuch afford only a probable evidence, not a demonstra-

"*Ut pervenias in mundum, qui totus bonus est et longus, quæ est subsistentia perpetua et æterna. Quod vero ait, Ut vivificaret nos sicut hodie, id intelligitur de subsistentia corporali prima, quæ ad tempus tantum durat.*" More Nev. p. iii. c. 27. p. 418.

^x Lev. xviii. 5. ^y Pocock. Not. Mis. p. 161. ^z Gen. iii. 19.

^a Men. ben. Is. de Res. Mor. I. i. §. 2. ^b Ex. vi. 3, 4.

^c Gen. xvii. 8. xxviii. 4. ^d Men. ben. Is. I. i. §. 4.

^e Div. Leg. vi. §. 3. vol. v. p. 414. They are taken from the work of Menasseh ben Israel.

^f Lib. I. cap. I.

tive proof^g; and therefore feels himself called upon to assign the reasons why a doctrine so important as that of a future retribution should not be taught in a more direct and perspicuous manner. Of these reasons we have already taken a review^h.

Having seen the nature of the arguments employed, and of the reasons assigned, for the obscure and imperfect discoveries of the Law on this vital subject, our surprise at finding that the doctrine of a future state is still maintained to have been the most essential part of the Mosaic dispensation, must now be rather enhanced than diminished. But in order to explain so great an apparent inconsistency, we have only to consider what are the sources of information from which, according to Jewish notions, a just estimate of that dispensation is to be drawn.

We find then that the Law which was given by God to Moses is declared by the Jews to have been of two kinds, the Written and the Oral. By the Written they understand that which is contained in the Pentateuch. By the Oral, that which, as they contend, was orally delivered by God to Moses, which was in like manner communicated by Moses to the Israelites, and afterwards transmitted to posterity and perpetuated in the traditions of the Jewish church. The manner in which these traditions are deduced from the time of Moses would furnish the subject of a curious and interesting narrative, but the description would lead us astray from our purposeⁱ. It will suffice to say, that the Mishna and the Talmud are regarded by the Jews as the authentic depositories of them: and that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is clearly delivered in those compilations as a part of the Law delivered by God to Moses.

We have said that these traditions carry with them, in the estimation of the Jews, an authority equal to that of the written Law. It will therefore not be improper to subjoin a few particulars which may serve to illustrate at once the value which the Jews attach to them, and, on the other hand, that to which they are justly entitled.

The eighth foundation of the Law declares, that the Law was given from heaven; and this is made by Maimonides to include both the written Law and the tradi-

^g The words of the original are quoted page 406.

^h Page 407.

ⁱ It is to be found in the *Porta Mosis*, sub init.

tional expositions of it, embracing the minutest particulars in the doctrines of the modern rabbins; all of which are maintained to be exactly framed according to the form which God prescribed to Moses. In like manner, the ninth foundation asserts the eternity of the Law; and this is likewise expounded to comprehend the traditional together with the written Law, both of which are said to be protected from change and abrogation by these words: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it¹."

The same writer quotes from the Talmud a declaration, that not even Elijah the prophet had authority to take away aught from the eighteen precepts which were sanctioned by the two schools of Hillel and Shammai^m. We are here to observe, that the concurrent decisions of these schools are regarded as a part of the traditionary or oral Law: and that the traditionary Law itself is understood to comprise, not only those precepts which the Jews profess to have received in their present state from Moses by traditional conveyance, but also a vast multitude of others deduced from the former in the way of inference, and of others successively deduced after the same manner, as occasions might arise which rendered them necessary, from the precepts which had been formerly received. The principles on which these deductions are formed are contained, as Maimonides tells us, in thirteen rules or modes of reasoning; which rules, as the Jews teach, were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinaiⁿ. In the application of these principles, when a controversy arose, the question was decided by the majority of opinions^o, and such majority was supposed to convey the infallible sense of the Divine Law^p. This was carried so far, that in settling the traditionary Law, a prophet was not admitted to have any higher authority than any other person qualified to assist in these decisions. In this respect, Joshua and Phineas were of no higher authority than Rabina and Rab Ashe, the compiler of the Talmud^q. "If a thousand prophets," says Maimonides, "all of whom were equal to Elijah and Eli-sha, were to propose an interpretation [of the Law], and a thousand and one wise men were to propose another and a different interpretation, we must incline to

¹ Deut. iv. 2. Maim. Por. Mos. pp. 65, 66.

^m Maim. Por. Mos. p. 24.

ⁿ Ib. p. 11.

^o Ibid. pp. 11, 19.

^p Ibid. p. 11.

^q Ibid. p. 11.

“the greater number: the opinion of the thousand and one wise men, and not that of the thousand illustrious prophets is to be followed^r.”

The traditions thus obtained are regarded as affording the infallible key to the interpretation of the written Law. This is carried to a great extent. The Law, for example, denounces in the case of a particular transgression, *the cutting off of the offender's hand*^s. The punishment thus denounced is declared by the traditional Law to signify nothing more than a *disgraceful mulct*. “Now if,” says Maimonides, “a prophet should arise who interpreted this precept of the Law, according to its literal meaning, to signify the actual abscission of the hand; if he were to allege the authority of a prophet, and plead a revelation from God: nevertheless he is to be strangled as a false prophet. Nor,” continues he, “should it avail that prophet if he should work a miracle in proof of his words; since Moses, the great prophet who astonished the world with his miracles, hath long ago declared to us, that no other Law should ever proceed from God than that which he delivered^t!”

The above may serve to illustrate the justice of that accusation in which the Scribes and Pharisees are charged by our Lord with *making the commandment of God of none effect through their tradition*^u.

^r Maim. Por. Mos. p. 19.

^s Deut. xxv. 12.

^t Ibid. p. 13. The substance of the passage, and not a literal translation, is given above.

^u The account which has been given above of the Jewish traditions will be found remarkably coincident with that conveyed in the passage of the Gospel here referred to. “Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the Scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by

It will be useful to state a few particulars which may serve to display the extent of that veneration which the Jews entertain, both for their traditions, and for the doctors by whom those traditions were delivered. With this view the following are selected from Basnage^x. One of these doctors was the rabbi Akiba, who underwent a cruel death by order of the emperor Adrian. His precepts are recorded in the Mishna. To him they ascribe a knowledge so profound, that it was owned to be a departure from life to deviate from his decisions. Moses, say they, foresaw by the help of God, that this Akiba would be more holy than himself. He therefore asked God, Why he did not prefer Akiba to carry his Law to the people? But God answered, That the birth of Akiba was remote, and that he could not wait so long to make known his Law to the people. The rabbi Bechai maintains, that the *oral Law*, which he declares to be contained in the six orders of the Talmud, is the *foundation of the written Law*. A popular maxim of the rabbins contains the following lesson: "Learn to regard the words of the scribes with greater attention than the words of the Law." Another rabbin assures us that "the Oral, and not the Written Law, is the foundation of religion." A writer in the Jerusalem Talmud declares, "that the words of the wise are more lovely than those of the prophets." Again: "There is no peace," says the Talmud, "for the consciences of those who forsake the study of the Talmud for that of the Bible." The Mishna declares, "that those who sin against the words of the wise are more guilty than those who violate the precepts of the Law." "The Jews," says the writer from whom we have extracted the foregoing particulars, "obstinately persist in preferring the Talmud to the holy Scripture. They compare the Scripture to water, and tradition to excellent wine. The Law, say they, is salt; the Mishna is pepper; and the Talmuds are precious aromatics. They boldly maintain, that he who sins against Moses may be pardoned, but that he who contradicts the doctors is deserving of death!"

The following considerations will contribute to illustrate

"me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." Mark vii. 1—13.

^x Hist. des Juifs, liv. iii. c. 6. §. 12, 13.

still further the delusion of a people by whom the tenets which have now been described are entertained.

In the traditions of the Jews we find an authority acknowledged which is professedly coordinate with that of the written word. We may add, that it is virtually paramount to it: since it is supposed to supply the true interpretation of the written Law, and that interpretation is oftentimes flatly contradictory to its grammatical construction. "By the help of this distinction between the Written and the Oral Law," as Basnage justly observes, "they make God say what they please, and give a divine authority to their imaginations. It was in their doctors' power to multiply the commandments, and vary them according to their caprice, and the people could not disobey them guiltless, from the moment they were persuaded that their heads were the secret depositaries of the will of the Almighty." Now it may reasonably be demanded of the Jew, Where do you find in the written Law a recognition of this authority, which, as you pretend, was designed always to subsist in union and alliance with its own? To this question, however difficult the solution of it might at first be thought, an answer is provided by Maimonides, who alleges the following text as declaring the authority of the Jewish traditions: "The word is very nigh unto thee, *in thy mouth*, and *in thy heart*, that thou mayest do it." *In thy mouth*, being thus understood to describe the Oral Law delivered to Moses; and *in thy heart*, those precepts which have been deduced by reasoning from the Law or from traditions previously received^z."

The excellence of this method of traditionary instruction is asserted by Maimonides, on a ground no less remarkable than the proof of its authority. He extols it as an excellent safeguard against a host of evils, such as corruptions of the written texts, doubt, dissension, schism, and erroneous interpretation^a!

^y Deut. xxx. 14.

^z "Hoc est quod dicit, Non est in cœlis ipsa ut dicas, *Quis ascendet pro nobis in cœlum*, &c. Et quod dicit, *In corde tuo, et in ore tuo*, hoc innuens, vel sententias quæ ore traduntur, vel conclusiones quæ speculatione (una ex potentiis e corde oriundis) eliciuntur, quibus etiam aliquid vel addi vel detrahi vetuit, dicens, *Non addes illi, neque diminues de eo*." Por. Mos. p. 13.

^a "Nosti, Talmud ipsum inter nos receptum, olim non fuisse in certum librum digestum, propter rationem illam, quæ tum passim obtinebat in gente

To sum up the whole. As we have seen that the Jewish traditions are regarded by that people as constituting a part of the Law of Moses equally sacred and authoritative with the written word; and that these traditions are contained in the Mishna and the Talmud, in both of which the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is most explicitly declared: we may thus be satisfied respecting the truth of Warburton's position, "that this doctrine is maintained by the Jews to have made the most essential part of the Mosaic dispensation." This is in fact nothing more than a paraphrase of the words of Maimonides, who says, that "the resurrection of the dead is the *foundation of foundations* of the Law of ^bMoses^c."

28. 16.

Though I have said that the difference, in point of religion, between the Israelite and the Gentile was wholly favourable to the Israelite: I am aware that the burdensome, laborious, and expensive requisitions of the Mosaic ritual, from which the Gentiles were exempt, may be alleged as an exception to the truth of this remark. In reference to this subject, the following remark of Maimonides is striking, and, with some abatement, appears to be just. "The Law of Moses was given for no other reason than in order to diminish the laborious offices connected with the ceremonies of religion. If there be any thing in it which wears the appearance of trouble and fatigue, this is wholly occasioned by our ignorance of the rites and customs prevailing in the world at the time of its delivery. For, consider how great is the difference between him who offered a burnt offering of his own son in honour of his god, and him who offered a similar offering of a dove in the service and honour of our

"nostra; *Verba, quæ dixi tibi ore, non licet tibi scripto divulgare.* Atque hæc fuit summa sapientia circa legem nostram, qua fugiebantur et vitabantur illa, in quæ sequentibus temporibus incidit; Varietates nempe, et perplexitates sententiarum ac opinionum, Dubia item, quæ oriri solent ex sermone scripto, et in librum relato, quibus accedunt Errores, qui a scriptoribus et librariis facillime committuntur, ex quibus postea oriuntur inter homines dissensiones, controversiæ, schismata, et sectæ, in negotiis et commerciis magna confusio." More Nev. P. 1. c. 71. p. 132.

^b Por. Mos. p. 60.

^c We should not omit to notice, in the doctrine of the Jews respecting their traditions, another cause which would materially obstruct the reception of our blessed Lord among the Jews, as their expected Messiah; since they expected that the Messiah would confirm by his authority the tradition of the elders. See Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, l. v. c. 10. §. 13.

"God," &c. In confirmation of this reasoning, he refers to Mic. vi. 3. Jer. ii. 5. and 31^d.

60. 4.

Among the writers here referred to we may mention Mr. Addison^e, Josephus the Jewish historian^f, Origen^g, and Cudworth^h. Cicero seems to speak of the fact as having had considerable influence in generating the universal belief of a future state, and to regard it as an admonition of nature suggesting to mankind the survival of the soulⁱ. Plato mentions, as a matter of undoubted certainty, apparitions of departed spirits, haunting sepulchres and monuments of the dead, and contends that the visible quality of such apparitions is owing to the adhesion of gross matter contracted by sensual defilement while the soul was united with the body^k. The most surprising circumstance in relation to this matter is an admission of the reality of such appearances by professed atheists, such as Democritus and Epicurus, together with the most awkward attempts to elude the inference which obviously flows from it. It will not be unappropriate if we here subjoin a few remarks from two of the distinguished writers whom we have just named.

"I think," says Addison, "a person who is thus terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the report of all historians sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless: could not I give myself up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact. I might here add, that not only the historians, to whom we may join the poets, but likewise the philosophers, of antiquity have favoured this opinion. Lucretius himself, though by the course of his philosophy he was obliged to maintain that the soul did not exist separate from the

^d Mor. Nev. p. iii. c. 47. p. 490.

^e Spectator, No. 110.

^f Antiq. Jud. l. xvii. c. 13. §. 4, 5. Quoted in the above-cited paper of the Spectator.

^g Cont. Cels. ii. 60.

^h Intell. Syst. p. 700. ed. 1678.

ⁱ "Qui nondum ea quæ multis post annis tractari cœpissent Physica didicissent, tantum sibi persuaserant, quantum *natura admonente* cognoverunt: rationes et causas rerum non tenebant; *visis quibusdam saepe movebantur, hisque maximis nocturnis, ut viderentur hi qui vita excesserant vivere.*" Tusc. Disp. I. 13.

^k Phædon, c. 30.

“ body, makes no doubt of the reality of apparitions, and
 “ that men have often appeared after their death. This I
 “ think very remarkable; he was so pressed with the mat-
 “ ter of fact which he could not have the confidence to
 “ deny, that he was forced to account for it by one of the
 “ most absurd unphilosophical notions that was ever start-
 “ ed. He tells us, that the surfaces of all bodies are per-
 “ petually flying off from their respective bodies one after
 “ another; and that these surfaces or thin cases that in-
 “ cluded each other whilst they were joined in the body
 “ like the coats of an onion, are sometimes seen entire
 “ when they are separated from it; by which means we
 “ often behold the shapes and shadows of persons who are
 “ either dead or absent¹.”

“ In the last place,” says Cudworth, “ we shall observe
 “ that Democritus was yet farther convinced, by these re-
 “ lations of apparitions; so as to grant that there was a
 “ certain kind of permanent beings and independent upon
 “ imagination, superior to men, which could appear in dif-
 “ ferent forms, and again disappear at pleasure, called by
 “ him idols or images; he supposing them to be of the
 “ same nature with those exuvius effluxes that stream
 “ continually from the surface of bodies: only he would
 “ not allow them to have any thing immortal at all in
 “ them, but their concretions to be at length all dissolv-
 “ able, and their personalities then to vanish into nothing.
 “ Thus Sextus the philosopher^m: *Democritus affirmeth,*
 “ *that there are certain idols or spectres that do often ap-*
 “ *proach to men, some of which are beneficent and some*
 “ *maleficent. Upon which account he wisheth that it might*
 “ *be his good hap to meet with fortunate idols. And he*
 “ *addeth, that these are of a vast bigness, and very lon-*
 “ *geve, but not incorruptible, and that they sometimes do*
 “ *fore-signifie unto men future events, both visibly ap-*
 “ *pearing to them, and sending forth audible voyces. Now*
 “ *though Democritus were much blamed for this conces-*
 “ *sion of his by his fellow atheists, as giving thereby too*
 “ *great an advantage to theists, yet in his own opinion*
 “ *did he sufficiently secure himself against the danger of*
 “ *a God from hence, by supposing all these idols of his to*
 “ *be corruptible, they being indeed nothing but certain*
 “ *finer concretions of atoms, a kind of aërial and ethereal*
 “ *animals, that were all body, and without any immortal*

¹ Spectator, No. 110.

^m “ Adv. Math. p. 311.”

“ soul, as he supposed men also to be : so that a God could
 “ be no more proved from them than from the existence
 “ of men. For thus he adds in Sextus : *Men in ancient*
 “ *times having a sense of these apparitions or idols, fell from*
 “ *thence into the opinion of a God ; although there be be-*
 “ *sides these idols, no other God, that hath an incorruptible*
 “ *nature*.”

77. 1.

The words of Cicero are : “ Quod literis extet, Phere-
 “ cydes Syrius primum dixit hominum animos esse *sempi-*
 “ *ternos*.” On this word, *sempiternos*, Warburton observes,
 “ that it properly signifies a *past*, as well as *future* eter-
 “ nity ;” in support of which construction he cites the au-
 thority of Donatus. In this sense, he contends that it
 is here employed ; and that the meaning of Cicero is, to
 allege the name of Pherecydes as the first who ascribed
 this kind of eternity to the soul. But whatever be the
 primary meaning of the word, I think it evident that Cicero
 did not so employ it in this place : because, but a short
 time before in the same discourse, he uses it twice in a
 sense from which the notion of a past eternity is plainly
 excluded^p, and it is quite unreasonable to suppose that he
 should so soon employ the same term again in a different
 sense, without annexing any remark as to the change of
 signification which he attached to it.

88. 15.

The great principle by which the courage of Socrates
 was supported at the approach of death, appears, in truth,
 to have been no other than that which has frequently
 prompted the commission of suicide : that is to say, he
 seems to have been influenced by a deep and deliberate
 conviction, that death, as the less of two evils, was far pre-
 ferable, under his circumstances, to the continuance of life.
 This view of the subject is fully warranted by the narrative
 of Xenophon ; which is also, as to some material points,
 confirmed by the less credible testimony of Plato. We
 find him, in this narrative, contemplating with mournful
 sentiments, the approaching infirmities of old age ; the de-
 cay of his sight and hearing, his memory and other facul-
 ties ; the near prospect of a time when life would be barren
 of enjoyment ; the pains of sickness and the tedious infir-
 mities which commonly precede the dissolution of the

^o Intell. System, p. 701.

^p See Tusc. Disp. I. c. 5.

body. With these feelings, he regards the death which awaits him from the sentence of his judges, as more desirable than that which he must otherwise expect in the ordinary course of things. These considerations appear moreover to have been strengthened by the alliance of others, springing from the vanity of that character which Tertullian has ascribed to him, *gloriæ animal*. Having reached an advanced time of life without the experience of those evils which are commonly attendant on the decay of nature, he considers it more creditable to his future fame, if he were to pass off the scene while enjoying the full vigour of his mind, than if he were to wait the arrival of that season, when the weakness of his understanding might betray itself at the last hour in acts derogatory from the dignity of his philosophical character. Actuated by these motives and principles⁹, we find him, at his trial, studiously exasperating his judges by the introduction of topics which he knew would be offensive; dwelling in an egotistical and arrogant manner on his virtues, his wisdom, and the important services he had rendered to his country; and on the whole, observing just that kind of behaviour which might be expected from a man, who throws away life as a thing in which he has no pleasure. How little indeed his fortitude was invigorated by a confidence of immortal life, we may judge from the following circumstance. Death, he observes, must be either the same thing with annihilation, or it must be, according to the common opinion, the passage of the soul into a different state of existence; but even on the lowest supposition, if it be regarded as the total annihilation of consciousness, still the change must be a prodigious advantage to him who undergoes it^r. This last particular is the more remarkable as coming from Plato, who endeavours on all occasions to make the most of the supposed persuasion of Socrates respecting the immortality of the soul.

⁹ Thus Xenophon acknowledges, that the bold and dignified style (*μεγαληγοριαι*) of his defence might justly be esteemed foolish, *if it be not regarded as proceeding from a conviction that death was preferable to life*. The following passage is to the same effect: 'Ὅσων νομίζω τιτυχημέναι καλοῖν καὶ παρὰ θείων καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἢν ἐγὼ δοῶν ἔχω περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ΤΑΤΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΦΑΙΝΩΝ Εἰ ΒΑΡΥΝΩ ΤΟΤΕ ΔΙΚΑΣΤΑΣ, αἰρηρομαι τελευτᾶν μᾶλλον, ἢ ἀνελυθέρως τὸ ζῆν ἐν προσαιτων, κερδαναι τον πολυ χιρω βιον ἀντι θανατου. And again: Σωκρατης δὲ ΔΙΑ ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑΛΥΤΕΙΝ' ΕΑΥΤΙΟΝ ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, ΦΘΟΝΟΝ ΕΠΙΛΟΜΕΝΟΣ, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΨΗΦΙΣΑΣΘΑΙ ΕΑΥΤΙΟΤ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ τοὺς δικαστας. Apol. Soc. Cf. Platonis Apoll. cc. 17, 18, 26.

^r Plat. Ap. Socr. c. 32. ed. Forster.

89. Note x.

What is here alleged from Athenæus is grounded on an emendation of the text, of which the necessity must be obvious on the slightest consideration. The words referred to are as follows. Ἄλλοι δὲ φασιν, ὡς ἀναγκoυς ὁ Γοργίας τὸν Πλάτωνος διαλογὸν, πρὸς τοὺς παρoντας εἶπεν, ὅτι οὐδὲν τούτων οὐτε εἶπεν, οὐτε ἤκουσε παρὰ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ. ταῦτα φασὶ καὶ Φαῖδωνα εἶπεν, ἀναγνόντα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς^s. On which Schweighaeuser observes : “ Quod Gorgiam, lecto Platonico dialogo “ qui ab eo nomen habet, dicentem faciunt libri nostri, se “ nihil tale vel ipsum dixisse vel a PLATONE audivisse, “ fieri non potest ut ita scripserit Athenæus : sed παρὰ “ ΣΩΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ haud dubie legendum ; cum non se, sed “ Socratem, cum Gorgia disputantem Plato fecerit.”

101. 14.

The position here advanced rests on the most decided testimonies of history, and even on the confessions of the early philosophers of Greece themselves. The following is a brief summary of the leading authorities among the writers of antiquity. Diodorus Siculus, l. i. from c. 96 to the end of the book ; Diogenes Laertius in the lives of Thales, Solon, Cleobulus, Plato, Pythagoras, Democritus, and Pyrrho : Plato's Timæus : Porphyry and Jamblichus in their lives of Pythagoras : Herodotus, l. ii. : Clement of Alexandria, Strom. l. i. c. 15. : Aristotle, as quoted by Diogenes Laertius^t, l. i. §. 1. Josephus cont. Apion.

It would lead to an unsuitable prolixity, if we were to collect together the information afforded us on this subject by the writers above enumerated. It may not however be uninteresting or useless if we quote from one of them, namely, Clement of Alexandria^u, a few remarks, which, as they are coincident with the general result to which such a collection of particulars would lead us, may supply the place of more extended and numerous citations.

“ With regard to the wise men and philosophers of “ Greece, it is hardly necessary to remark, that the greater “ part of the most ancient of them were either barbarians “ by birth, or instructed by barbarians ; since it has been “ shewn, that Pythagoras was either a Tyrrhenian or a Tyrian : Antisthenes was a Phrygian ; Orpheus an Odry-

^s L. xi. c. 113.

^t From a work entitled Μαγικόν, which that author ascribes to him, but which Suidas attributes to Antisthenes, and others to Rhodon.

^u Strom. l. 15.

“ sian or a Thracian: and Homer is for the most part
 “ thought to have been an Egyptian. Thales was a Phe-
 “ nician by birth, and is moreover recorded to have con-
 “ versed with the prophets of Egypt. Pythagoras did the
 “ same, and was likewise circumcised by those prophets,
 “ in order that he might be admitted to the most sacred
 “ recesses of their temples*, and thus become instructed
 “ in the mystical philosophy of the Egyptians. He also
 “ conversed with the most eminent of the Chaldeans and
 “ the Magi.—As for Plato, he does not deny that he
 “ brought home from the barbarians the noblest parts of
 “ his philosophy, and confesses that he visited Egypt.
 “ —Indeed it is manifest, that he takes every occasion to
 “ magnify the barbarians; since he speaks of both himself
 “ and Pythagoras as having learned the largest and best
 “ part of their doctrines among them. In one of his dia-
 “ logues he discovers his acquaintance with the Egyptian
 “ king, and speaks of Thoyth, an eminently wise man,
 “ whom he knew to be the same with Mercury; and in an-
 “ other he appears to have known certain Thracians who
 “ held the immortality of the soul. Pythagoras is recorded
 “ to have been the scholar of Sonches, the Egyptian chief-
 “ prophet; Plato of Sechnuphis the Heliopolitan; and Eu-
 “ doxus the Cnidian of Conuphis, who was also an Egyp-
 “ tian.—With regard to Democritus, we find him in his
 “ writings, magnifying his own learning after the following
 “ manner: ‘I have travelled over a greater part of the
 “ earth than any of my contemporaries, carrying my in-
 “ quiries into the most remote points of human know-
 “ ledge. I have also witnessed a greater variety of climates
 “ and of soils. I have conversed with a greater number
 “ of learned men. No man, not even those who are called
 “ Arpedonaptæ among the Egyptians, ever surpassed me
 “ in the construction of lines, together with the demon-
 “ stration [of their properties]. With these learned men
 “ I have maintained an intercourse on the whole for eighty
 “ years in foreign countries.’ For he visited Babylon, and
 “ Persis, and Egypt, and was a scholar of both the Magi
 “ and the priests. Pythagoras first made mention of Zo-
 “ roaster the Persian Magus: of whose secret books the
 “ followers of Prodicus boast themselves in possession.
 “ Alexander, in his treatise on the Pythagoric symbols,
 “ records that Pythagoras was a scholar of Nazaratus the

* Gr. *τα αδύτα*, those from which all but the priests were excluded.

“ Assyrian ;—and that he was moreover a hearer of the
 “ Gauls and Brachmans.—It appears then, that philoso-
 “ phy, a thing greatly beneficial to mankind, flourished in
 “ ancient times among the barbarians, and diffused its light
 “ among the nations ; and that it was afterwards intro-
 “ duced into Greece. And those who taught it were, the
 “ prophets of Egypt, the Chaldeans of Assyria, the Druids
 “ of Gaul, the Samaneans of Bactria, those who philoso-
 “ phized among the Celts, the magi of Persia,—the gym-
 “ nosophistæ of India ; and other barbarian philosophers.”

Though we have said, that the early philosophy of Greece was derived for the most part from very impure sources of information, we ought however to add, that it appears in some instances to have been gathered from an intercourse with those among whom the doctrines of revealed truth were still preserved in their purity. To these doctrines, indeed, do the ancient philosophers appear to have been ultimately indebted for whatever supplies of true and valuable knowledge they possessed : while that impure mixture of falsehood with which their systems are debased, may be justly regarded, as having originated, either in the perverted state of theology and science among those barbarians who were their more immediate instructors, or else in the abuse of their own reason and the vanity of their imaginations. In relation to this subject, the following remarkable particulars are furnished by the testimony of heathen writers.

We learn from Megasthenes ^y, (a heathen historian, contemporary with Seleucus Nicator,) that whatever had been said respecting nature by the ancients, was also to be found among those who philosophized out of Greece; namely, partly among the Brachmans of India, and partly among those inhabitants of Syria who are called Jews. The authority of Clearchus, an eminent disciple of Aristotle, is cited by Clement of Alexandria ^z and Josephus ^a, as recording the intercourse between that great philosopher, and a person of the Jewish nation : and the latter of these writers, among other interesting particulars connected with this affair, gives a citation of Aristotle's words from the work of Clearchus, acknowledging the information, which Aristotle and his companions had gathered from the Jew, to have been more valuable than that which they had communicated to him. Josephus declares concerning Pythagoras, that

^y Apud Clem. Alex. Str. I. 15.

^z Ibid.

^a Cont. Ap. i. 22.

he was certainly not only well acquainted with the institutions of the Jews, but also, for the most part, an imitator of them: and cites the authority of Hermippus, a diligent and accurate historian, in proof of his assertion^b. We learn from Porphyry, respecting the same philosopher, that he visited not only the Egyptians, the Arabs, and Chaldeans, but also the Hebrews; and that the wisdom he acquired was principally the fruit of his travels among these nations^c. In relation to this subject, the narrative of Jamblichus is no less remarkable. He relates^d, that when Pythagoras in the earlier part of his life visited Thales, the latter, after communicating to Pythagoras whatever instruction he could, and excusing himself by reason of age and infirmity from doing more, strenuously urged him "to take a voyage to Egypt, and especially to converse with the priests at Memphis and Diospolis; alleging that he himself had obtained from them those instructions to which he owed his reputation for wisdom." Now it is remarkable that, of the two great divisions of Greek philosophy, the Ionic and the Italic, we find Thales at the head of the succession in the former, and Pythagoras in nearly the same situation with regard to the latter: Thales being, as is generally supposed, a Phenician by birth, Pythagoras his disciple, and both of them instructed in Egypt. From which it appears, that the knowledge of both these early sages was derived from two countries, in both of which primeval truth was much debased by superstition and idolatry, and of which both were situated near to the country of that people, who were the depositaries of the oracles of God and of the uncorrupted primitive religion of mankind.

I cannot conclude this note without observing, that the most valuable information and remarks on the interesting subject of it, are contained in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the third book of Witsius's *Ægyptiaca*.

101. 26.

— *that portion of its literature, which, being anterior to the age of philosophy, was therefore secure from its infection.*] How soon after the appearance of Pythagoras the Grecian mythology was infected with his doctrines, will appear from the following lines of Pindar, whose early

^b Cont. Ap. i. 22.

^c De Vita Pythag. §. 11, 12.

^d De Vita Pythag. c. ii. §. 12.

life was contemporary with the latter years of Pythagoras, and who is described by Clement of Alexandria as a member of his sect^e. Here we meet with the doctrine of the transmigration in a form very similar to that in which it occurs in the Phædrus of Plato.

Ὅσοι δ' ἐτολμασαν ἐς τρις
Ἐκατέρωθι μειναντες
Ἀπο παμπαν ἀδικῶν ἐχειν
Ψυχὰν, εἰτεῖλαν Διὸς
Ὅδον παρα Κρονου τυρ-
σιν· ἐνθα μακαρῶν
Νασον ὠκεανίδες
Αὔραι περιπνεουσιν· κ. τ. λ. Ol. II. 123.

The same appears from a fragment of Pindar contained in the Menon of Plato^f.

101. 30.

—— *the prevailing sentiments of savage life, &c.*] Similar opinions respecting a future state discover themselves in the mythology of the northern nations. The following description is taken from Mallet's Northern Antiquities^g. "Those only whose blood had been shed in battle might aspire to the pleasures which Odin prepared for them in Valhalla. The pleasures which they expected after death, shew us plainly enough what they relished during life. 'The heroes,' says the Edda, 'who are received into the palace of Odin, have every day the pleasure of arming themselves, of passing in review, of ranging themselves in order of battle, and of cutting one another in pieces; but as soon as the hour of repast approaches, they return on horseback all safe and sound back to the hall of Odin, and fall to eating and drinking. Though the number of them cannot be counted, the flesh of the boar Serimner is sufficient for them all; every day it is served up at table, and every day it is renewed again entire: their beverage is beer and mead; one single goat, whose milk is excellent mead, furnishes enough of that liquor to intoxicate all the heroes: their cups are the skulls of enemies they have slain. Odin alone, who sits at a table by himself, drinks wine for his entire liquor. A crowd of virgins wait upon the heroes at table, and

^e Strom. V. 14.

^f Opp. vol. iv. p. 351.

^g Vol. i. p. 119. Ed. 1770.

“ fill their cups as fast as they empty them.’ Such was
 “ that happy state, the bare hope of which rendered all the
 “ inhabitants of the north of Europe intrepid, and which
 “ made them not only to defy, but even seek with ardour,
 “ the most cruel deaths. Accordingly king Regner Lodbrog
 “ when he was going to die, far from uttering groans or
 “ forming complaints, expressed his joy by these verses.
 “ ‘ We are cut to pieces with swords : but this fills me with
 “ joy, when I think of the feast that is preparing for me in
 “ Odin’s palace. Quickly, quickly seated in the splendid
 “ habitation of the gods, we shall drink beer out of the
 “ skulls of our enemies. A brave man fears not to die. I
 “ shall utter no timorous words as I enter the hall of
 “ Odin.’ ”

117.

Against Mr. Addison’s argument for the immortality of the soul, which is treated of in this and the following page, I am aware that an objection may be framed by alleging the weakness and decay of faculties in aged persons. But it is to be considered, that such decay is an effect purely corporeal. It cannot be said that the spiritual part of us, viewed abstractedly in itself and independently of the body, is ever debilitated or impaired by years, so as to be incapable of acquiring new knowledge, or of improving the mental vigour which has been obtained by the previous exercise of reason. This effect indeed we discern in the compounded being : it is not however an affection of the soul, but occasioned only by the state of those bodily organs in conjunction with which the soul performs its operations^b. The result then of a just observation of this mat-

^b Aristotle, though no advocate for the *immortality* of the soul, as we understand the term, has insisted upon this distinction, while maintaining the *eternity of its duration* as a substance. ‘Ο δε νους εοικεν εσθηναι, ουτια τις ανσα, και ου φθειρεσθαι. Μαλιστα γαρ εφθιρετ’ αν υπο της εν τω γηρα αμανρωσεως. Νυνι δε, ωσπερ εστι των αισθητηριων συμβαινει· ει γαρ λαβοι ο περισβυτης ομμα τοιονδε, βλεποι αν ωσπερ και ο νεος. ‘ΟΝΣΤΕ ΤΟ ΓΗΡΑΣ, ΟΤ ΤΩΙ ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΠΕΠΟΝΘΕΝΑΙ ΤΙ, ΑΛΛ’ ΕΝ ΩΙ· καθαπερ εν μελαις και νεοις. Και το νεον δη και το θεωρειν μαραινεται, αλλου τινος εσω φθειρομενου· αυτο δε απαντες εστι. “ The mind, “ being a substance, appears to be introduced into the body, and to be incorruptible. For [if it were corruptible], it would be most subject to corruption from the decay of its faculties in old age. But as the case is, the same thing happens with regard to the mind as does with regard to the organs of sensation : for if the old man were to obtain a vigorous eye, he would see as well as the young. So that [*the infirmity of*] *old age consists, not in any affection of the soul, but in an affection of that in which the soul is placed*; agreeably to what takes place in drunkenness and dis-ease. And the power of thought and contemplation is impaired, because something else within [the body] is corrupted : but the faculty itself is impassible.” De Anima, i. 5.

ter would lead us to infer, that a power designed for immortality is united to a substance which we now find to be in a perishable and mortal state: and thus should we be led, from surveying the constitution of the soul, to conclude respecting it agreeably to the discoveries of scripture, that the breath of life, which was breathed into man at his creation, was given him with a view to the perpetuity of his duration.

119. 12.

The doctrine of the Egyptians respecting the soul is thus stated by Herodotus: "That the soul of man is immortal; that on the death of the body, it migrates successively for ever into some other animal at the time of its birth; that when it has thus passed through all the [species of] animals which inhabit the land and the sea, together with all the [species of] winged animals, it reenters the body of a man at the time of its birth; and that it performs this revolution once in 3000 years." Of the doctrine thus described at length, he says, that the Egyptians were the earliest nation who maintained it: yet his authority has been continually quoted as saying, *that the Egyptians were the first who held that the soul is immortal!* This is the more remarkable when we advert to the original text, in which the author appears to have obviated the possibility of misconception, by employing the demonstrative pronoun both immediately before and after his description of the doctrine. The words are as follows: Πρωτοι δε και ΤΟΝΔΕ τον λογον Αιγυπτιοι εισι οι ειποντες, "ως ανθρωπου ψυχη αθανατος εστι· του σωματος δε καταφθινοντος, ες αλλο ζων αιει γινομενον εσδυσεται· επεαν δε περιελθη παντα τα χερσαια και τα θαλασσια και τα πετεινα, αυτις ες ανθρωπου σωμα γινομενον εσδυειν· την περιηλυσιν δε αυτη γινεσθαι· εν τρισχιλιοσι ετεσι." ΤΟΥΤΩι τω λογω εισι οι Έλληνων εχρησαντο, κ. τ. λ. The mistake is, I believe, wholly confined to modern writers. It is noticed by Larcher, in the second edition of his translation of Herodotus. Sir John Marsham has understood this passage of Herodotus, as if the sense of that historian had been fully given in the following words, πρωτοι τονδε τον λογον Αιγυπτιοι εισι ειποντες, ως ανθρωπου ψυχη αθανατος εστι: for here he stops short in his quotationⁱ. On the ground of this misconstruction, he

ⁱ His words are as follows: "Nobilissimum autem eorum inventum fuit "Immortalitas Animæ; ita ut de vita spem aliquam haberent, etiam post hujus vitæ interitum. Πρωτοι τονδε τον λογον Αιγυπτιοι εισι ειποντες, ως ανθρωπου ψυχη αθανατος εστι. Cum vero ratiocinatione sua nihil magis de

speaks of the immortality of the soul as *the noblest of Egyptian discoveries*; and seems to think that the doctrine of a future state was as much the peculiar fruit of that people's ingenuity, as a certain artificial method of hatching chickens which is related to have been in use among them. Witsius, in his excellent confutation of Marsham, instead of rectifying the misconstruction of his opponent, has contented himself with giving the lie to Herodotus for an assertion which never came into his head. "Quum animarum immortalitatem," says he, "primum Ægyptiorum inventum esse scripsit Herodotus, *splendide mentitus est*^k." This is the more remarkable in Witsius, as he has on another occasion very properly cautioned his readers against giving credit to Marsham's quotations. "Non possum," says he, "quin lectores moneam, ne temere Marshami citationibus fidem suam adstringant; qui, ubi Ægyptios suos laudandi occasionem aliquam se invenisse putat, nimis sæpe suis indulget affectibus^l." This mistake of Herodotus's meaning has been so prevalent, that it would be unfair to ground upon it a charge of wilful misrepresentation against Marsham: though, on the other hand, it is not improbable that he may have been the first propagator of it, and that the error may have passed current on his authority for want of due examination in those who have followed him, since he is the earliest of those modern writers in whom I recollect having met with it.

128. 12.

But both these great lights of paganism, though themselves justly suspected of infidelity with regard to a future retribution, &c.] Of the suspicion here expressed, it is fit that the grounds should be stated. With regard to Pythagoras, the quotation from Timæus will justly be regarded as carrying with it considerable weight; and the evidence which it affords will be corroborated in the course of observation we are about to pursue. But in these remarks we shall chiefly be concerned with Plato.

I. As the frequent and strong declarations of a future state which occur in the writings of this philosopher will naturally appear to favour the contrary presumption, it

"Anima hominis, quam de bestię, assecuti fuerint; existimabant animas de hominibus in bestias, de bestiis in homines transire. Του σωματος καταφθινοντος, ες αλλο ζων ασι γινομενον εσθυσιν, Corpore defuncto in aliud atque aliud corpus genitum, migrare animam." Chronicus Canon, p. 217. ed. Lond. 1672.

^k Ægyptiaca, l. ii. c. 15. §. 4.

^l Ægyptiaca, l. ii. c. 16. §. 8.

will be right to obviate, in the first place, the seeming contradiction they present to the opinion we have advanced.

The general principle of the double doctrine has already been stated from Synesius^m. This indeed was the common doctrine of both the Pythagorean and Platonic schools, "that all things were not to be declared to all menⁿ." Plato in the strongest manner declares his own concurrence in it, where, speaking in the person of Socrates, he says: "It seems to be requisite, that magistrates should employ much falsehood and deceit for the benefit of those whom they govern^o." Such being his principle, it cannot be doubted but that, if he had disbelieved a future state, he would nevertheless have taught it: since his writings evince, in the fullest manner, his conviction of the indispensable necessity of that doctrine for the purposes of social good.

II. If Plato really believed a future state, he cannot be supposed to have believed it in any other way than according to the system of his metempsychosis: for he does not any where recognise the doctrine in a manner at variance with that form of it^p. The following conclusion will therefore be inevitable: If he did not believe the metempsychosis, he did not believe a future state. Now his disbelief of the metempsychosis will, I think, be evident from the following considerations.

Of a doctrine which he sincerely believed, his various statements would have been consistent and uniform. This is always the case with men who express opinions taken up on serious and settled conviction: it is only in the exercise of fiction and the indulgence of fancy, that we find them vary in their statements according to the feeling and purpose of the moment. But this consistency we shall not find in the several statements which Plato has given of this doctrine. There are five of his dialogues^q in which it is described; and of the several accounts thus given of it,

^m Page 88 of this work.

ⁿ Μη ειναι προς παντας παντα ρητα.

^o De Rep. l. v. Opp. vol. vii. pp. 23, 24.

^p His Gorgias indeed contains an account of future rewards and punishments, in which the metempsychosis is not expressly mentioned. There seems however to be a manifest allusion to it, where, speaking of the eternal punishments of the incurably wicked in the infernal regions, he says, "that these punishments, though no way beneficial to the sufferers, are nevertheless less profitable to all unjust persons who from time to time come into those regions, since they operate as *admonitions* and *warnings*:" of which warnings it is not easy to understand the use, except on the supposition of a return to the probationary state. Plat. Opp. vol. iv. pp. 168, 169.

^q Timæus, Phædrus, Menon, Phædon, and De Republica.

each is, as to some leading particulars, inconsistent with all the others. It will be unnecessary to specify in detail these numerous inconsistencies, the fact of their existence being sufficient for the present argument. Now that he seriously entertained all these contradictory views upon the same subject is impossible. The existence of so many destroys the evidence of his belief of any one; and the contradiction which is found in them affords the strongest presumption that he believed none. From which it seems to be a fair consequence, that he did not believe a future state at all: since he no where recognises that doctrine except in the form of the metempsychosis.

III. An anonymous biographer of Pythagoras, of whose work an abstract is given in the Bibliotheca of Photius, has the following passage^r. "Plato and Aristotle, in like manner, declare that the soul is immortal; though some, not being able to fathom the meaning of Aristotle, imagine him to say that it is mortal." If therefore we ascertain the precise nature of the views entertained by Aristotle upon this subject, we shall obtain a material help towards discovering those of Plato.

Now with regard to Aristotle, it is undeniable that he considered death as the final and total extinction of human consciousness^s. It is equally certain that he expressly declares the soul, or rather a particular faculty of it, to be eternal and immortal^t. In order to reconcile these apparent contradictions, we are to observe the distinction which he makes between two faculties of the soul, the *passive mind*^u and the *active mind*. By the former of these terms he denotes the faculty of apprehension; by the latter, the active power of judgment and reasoning. Now concerning the *passive mind*, he declares, that it is mortal, and cannot be separated from the body, because the ideas (φαντασματα) which it apprehends are wholly supplied by bodily perception^x. Of the latter, that is the *active mind*, he declares that it does exist in separation from the body, that it is immortal and eternal. But at the same time he maintains, that though existing separate from the body, it

^r Cod. 259. Πλάτων και Αριστοτελης αθανατον ὁμοιως λεγουσι την ψυχην· καν τινες εις τον Αριστοτελους νουν ουκ εμβαθυνοντες, ἐνητην νομιζουσιν αυτον λεγειν.

^s Φοβερωτατον δ' ο θανατος· περας γαρ και ουδεν επι τω τεθνεωτι δοκει, ουτε αγαθον, ουτε κακον ειναι. Eth. ad Nic. iii. 6.

^t De An. iii. 6.

^u Παθητικος νους; which he also calls φαντασια.

^x Φαντασια ου γιγνεται ανευ αισθησιως. De An. iii. 3. Το αισθητικον ουκ ανευ σωματος. Ibid. iii. 5.

no longer retains any memory, consciousness, or power of thought, because it can exercise its contemplative power only in conjunction with the *passive mind*, which passive mind is inseparable from the body, and is perishable^y. Here then the faculty in question is plainly declared to be eternal, and as plainly declared to become divested of all personality and consciousness as soon as it is separated from the body. In this I apprehend there was a perfect agreement between Aristotle and Plato.

IV. This conclusion will appear the more reasonable from the following considerations. The real doctrine of Pythagoras respecting the soul is thus stated by Diogenes Laertius: "That the soul is discerped from the ether, "and that it is immortal, because the substance from "which it is discerped is immortal^z." If now we ask, what is meant by the ether, we find it explained in Plutarch, who gives the same meaning in a different form of words: "Pythagoras and Plato," says he, "held that the "soul is incorruptible; for that, when it goes out of the "body, it returns back into the soul of the universe, which "is homogenous to it^a." If again we would understand what is meant by the soul of the universe, we find that, according to the doctrine of Pythagoras, it was the same with the Deity^b. So that here the notion of the soul's immortality is nothing else than the doctrine which we have already described^c, of its refusion into the Divine Essence.

V. Though the following particulars might, in themselves,

^y Οὗτος ὁ νοῦς [i. e. ὁ ποιητικὸς] χωριστος, καὶ αἰώνιος, καὶ ἀπαθής.—Χωρισθεὶς δὲ ἐστὶ μόνον τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐστὶ, καὶ ΤΟΤΤΟ ΜΟΝΟΝ ΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΑἰΔΙΟΝ. ΟΤ ΜΗΜΟΝΕΤΟΜΕΝ ΔΕ, ὅτι τοῦτο μὲν ἀπαθὲς, ὃ δὲ παθητικὸς νοῦς φθαρτός, ΚΑΙ ΑΝΕΤ ΤΟΤΤΟΤ ΟΥΘΕΝ ΝΟΕΙ. "This active mind is separable, un-
"mixed, and impassible. But it is separable only in regard to its essence,
" [i. e. not in the retention of its exercise and functions,] and this its
" essence only is immortal and eternal. But we do not remember with it,
" [when separated from the body,] because this [i. e. the active mind] is
" impassible, [that is, unsusceptible of external impressions,] but the pas-
" sive mind is corruptible, and without the passive the active can contemplate
" nothing." De An. iii. 6.

^z Εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποσπασμα αἰθέρος, — ἀθανάτον τε εἶναι αὐτὴν, ἐπειδὴ περ καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐ ἀπισπασταὶ ἀθανάτον ἐστὶ. Diog. Laert. viii. 28.

^a Πυθαγόρας, Πλάτων, ἀφθάρτον εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν, ἐξίουσαν γὰρ εἰς τὴν τοῦ παντός ψυχὴν ἀναχωρεῖν πρὸς τοὺς ὁμογενεῖς. De Plac. Philosoph. iv. 7.

^b "Pythagoras, qui censuit, *animus esse per naturam rerum omnem*
"*intentum et commeanem, ex quo nostri animi carperentur, non vidit*
"*distractione humanorum animorum discerpi et lacerari Deum: et cum*
"*miseri animi essent, quod plerisque contingeret, tam Dei partem esse mi-*
"*seram.*" De Nat. Deor. i. 11.

^c Page 141.

as they affect the present question, be entitled to little consideration, they must be admitted, when viewed in conjunction with the foregoing arguments, to strengthen the probability of the inference we deduce from them. Cicero has transmitted to us the following line translated from the poet Epicharmus :

Emori nolo : sed me esse mortuum nihil æstumo^d.

Here is a plain contradiction to the doctrine of a future state : since the sentiment thus expressed is that of a man, who, viewing death as the final close of existence, contemplates that event with anxiety and horror, but looks upon every thing beyond it with indifference^e. Now concerning this Epicharmus we are to observe, that he was a Pythagorean, instructed by Pythagoras himself^f, and that he is charged by Jamblichus^g with *divulging in his poems the secret doctrines of his sect*. This he is said to have done *covertly, and in a sportive manner* ; which his occupation as a comic poet would afford him the most favourable opportunities of doing. The above sentiment may therefore not improbably be viewed as containing one of those Pythagorean arcana which he divulged. It is true, that Jamblichus, among other inconsistencies for which his work is remarkable, tells us in the same breath, that Epicharmus was only an exoteric disciple, and not admitted into the interior and more sacred doctrines of his sect : which is just the same thing as to accuse a man of telling secrets which he does not know. The more probable supposition is, that he was disowned by reason of the discreditable nature of his disclosures.

Such are the facts and considerations by which we are induced to think, that the doctrine of a future retribution was, by Pythagoras and Plato, valued and taught solely as

^d Cic. Tusc. Disp. i. 8.

^e This is evident : because Cicero declares it to be the same with a sentiment which had been just before expressed in other words as follows : “ Age, jam concedo non esse miseros, qui mortui sunt, quoniam extorsisti ut faterer, qui omnino non essent, eos ne miseros quidem esse posse. Quid ? Qui vivimus, cum moriendum sit, nonne miseri sumus ? Quæ enim potest in vita esse jucunditas, cum dies et noctes cogitandum sit, jam jamque esse moriendum ? ” c. 7.

^f Diog. Laert. viii. 78.

^g His account of the matter is as follows : Των δ' ἐξωθεν ακροατῶν γενέσθαι καὶ Ἐπιχαρμόν· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ συστήματος τῶν ἀνδρῶν. Αἰφικροῖνον δὲ εἰς Συρακούσας, διὰ τὴν ἱερῶν τυραννίδα, τοῦ μὲν φανερώς φιλοσοφεῖν ἀποσχισθαι. Εἰς μίτρον δὲ εἰσελθὼν τὰς διανοίας τῶν ἀνδρῶν, μετὰ παιδίας κρυφαῖα ἐκφέροντα τὰ Πυθαγόρου δόγματα. V. P. §. 266.

a political doctrine, but wholly disbelieved by them both. We will only observe, in conclusion, that the statements which are here advanced in respect to either of them, may reasonably be extended in their application to the other: since the opinions of Plato on this subject are well known to have been framed on the model of those of Pythagoras.

139. 1.

We have the fullest reason to believe that he never attempted to disprove, nor even disowned them.] As a proof, however, of the contrary, Warburton^h lays the greatest stress on the following passage from Ciceroⁱ: “ Qui Apollinis oraculo sapientissimus est judicatus: qui non tum hoc, tum illud, ut in plerisque, sed IDEM dicebat semper, ANIMOS HOMINUM ESSE DIVINOS: iisque, cum e corpore excessissent, REDITUM in cælum patere, optinere et justissimo cuique expeditissimum.” But the force of this testimony is wholly enervated by the employment of the term *reditus in cælum*; a term in which Cicero describes the immortality of the soul in strict agreement with the Platonic notion of it. This may be seen by the repeated use of the same term in the *Somnium Scipionis*: where the language of Cicero, throughout, most explicitly conveys an exact concurrence with the sentiments of Plato in relation to the particulars in question. We allude to the *eternal preexistence*, the *immortality of brutes*, and the *unchangeable number of souls*: all of which are conclusions arising from the argument of Plato, of which we have given a translation^k, and which Cicero has here incorporated in the discourse of Scipio Africanus. The same point will be further established when we consider, that Cicero, in the part of his treatise from which the citation of Warburton is extracted, is citing his authorities for the immortality of the soul, and that he had just before included in the enumeration of those authorities the names of Pythagoras and his disciples. Now in regard to the latter, who are here mentioned with the same respect as Socrates, it is plain that they are not exonerated from the general censure which Warburton has justly passed on the ancient philosophers. The quotation from Cicero then is rather corroborative of the position contained in the text, than contradictory to it. We must however admit, that the confirmation it affords is perfectly nugatory:

^h D. L. iii. §. 4. p. 195.ⁱ De Am. c. 4.^k Pp. 89—92 of this work.

since it is little more than a translation from the Phædon of Plato, whose testimony on this point proves nothing: being entitled, for reasons which we have already stated, to no credit whatever. But indeed, if this testimony were admitted, the scepticism of Socrates on the subject of a future state must appear most fully confirmed: since we find him, in the narrative of his defence which has been given us by Plato, declaring, at one time, that he does not know whether death be a good or an evil¹; and at another, alleging the indecision of his mind respecting the state of departed souls, as the greatest proof of his superior wisdom^m.

146. 1.

— *And scarcely of any practical effect in the regulation of life.*] In order to a just estimate of the value of those disquisitions respecting the soul for which we are indebted to the philosophy of the ancients, their practical influence, as well as their intrinsic worth, ought doubtless to be weighed in the balance.

Now if we would judge of such influence by the high reputation for virtue which is currently attached to the names of some of the greatest philosophers, we might readily admit that it was both great and beneficial: but if we search into the grounds of that reputation, we shall certainly have reason to beware how we trust so fallacious a guide. While under the darkness of Gentile ignorance, the most erroneous standard of rectitude prevailed, and the most pernicious maxims of morality were generally received as the laws of virtue: while the vanity of philosophy, in the absence of revealed authority, was suffered to vent itself without contradiction in the praises of its followers, and its counterfeit wisdom was blindly admired, only because mankind were unacquainted with the true: we cannot wonder at the renown for which those eminent characters were thus indebted to a false and misguided judgment. But it may justly be deemed surprising that such renown should be echoed in modern ages: since Christianity has now been afforded to correct the opinions of mankind, to mark out the true lines of duty, to separate in human conduct the specious appearance, from the reality, of rectitude; and has thus discovered the deformity and depravity of various dispositions and actions which were regarded by antiquity as venial, innocent, or even glorious.

¹ Plat. Ap. Soc. c. 27.

^m Ibid. c. 17.

The Gospel, it must be owned, does not deeply influence the hearts of all who embrace it, and therefore the just and full extent of its influence is not seen to most advantage in large and promiscuous communities: but if we estimate this influence at the very lowest, it must at least be allowed to have had a most considerable and beneficial operation in giving a tincture to the general manners and sentiments of mankind. The consequence is, that many by whom it is not vitally and spiritually cherished, are nevertheless materially improved by it; since they have been kept under salutary restraint by a law of public opinion and decency, framed agreeably to its instructions.

Now if we would frame our judgment respecting the character of the pagan philosophers even by this low standard, we shall certainly find it difficult upon inquiry to discover the grounds on which they still continue, in many instances, to be regarded as splendid examples of moral virtue. To establish the contrary proposition from the best evidence of which we are in possession, would not be difficult, but would require a detail of quotation too copious for our present purpose. The following citation from Lactantius may, however, as it embodies in it the testimony of other writers whose impartiality in relation to this subject cannot be disputed, partly supply the want of more numerous authorities. "There are," says he, "and always have been, numberless persons who have maintained a virtuous life without the benefit of instruction: among the philosophers, on the contrary, you will meet with very rare examples of any praiseworthy action. Who then can possibly suppose, that they who are themselves destitute of virtue, can be qualified for teaching it? Look carefully into their lives and behaviour, and you will find them passionate, covetous, governed by their lusts, insolent, and petulant: you will find them hiding their vices under the mask of wisdom, and practising at home the very things which they censured in their public discourses. It may be said that I am carried beyond the bounds of truth by the love of invective. Does not Cicero, then, confess and complain of the very same thing? 'How seldom,' says he, 'can you meet with a philosopher, whose manners, whose temper, and whose life, are framed agreeably to reason? who looks upon the government of life, and not the ostentation of science, as the true discipline of philosophy? who governs himself, and lives conformably to his own deci-

“ sions? You may discover in some of them so much levity and self-conceit, that ignorance would have been to them better than learning: some you will find avaricious, others vain-glorious; and many so totally enslaved to their lusts, that their lives and their speeches appear to be wonderfully contradictory to each other.’ Cornelius Nepos also addresses himself to the same Cicero after the following manner: ‘ So far am I from looking up to philosophy for the direction of life and the production of happiness, that I think no men more in want of guidance and direction as to the conduct of life, than many of those who are devoted to the study of philosophy. For I observe a great part of those, who, in the schools, inculcate modesty and continency with the greatest acuteness and talent, living themselves in the most shameful indulgence of every kind of lust.’ In like manner Seneca observes in his *Exhortations*: ‘ Many of the philosophers are of such a character, that their eloquent dissertations contain the matter of their own reproach. When you hear them speaking in censure of avarice, lust, and ambition, you might suppose them to be prosecuting their own accusation; so much do their public invectives rebound against themselves. In this respect you can regard them only in the light of those medical practitioners, whose labels are inscribed with the names of antidotes, while the vessels to which they are attached are filled with poisonsⁿ.’”

The above may be viewed as conveying a fair description of the philosophical character, as it was generally sustained in the pagan world. If we would restrict our estimate of that character to those philosophers by whom the doctrine of a future state was professed, we shall, even in this case, discover little which may serve to exemplify that practical support of virtue which the doctrine is commonly supposed to yield. Of this limited class, the design of our work has necessarily led us to illustrate the character of some of the more prominent; and we have also had occasion, both in the body of our work and in the notes, to question the sincerity of that belief in a future retribution which they professed. We shall only add in general, that an examination of their lives and writings will verify to the fullest extent the description we have given of their moral defects. With regard to the best of them, if their

ⁿ Lact. Inst. Div. iii. 15.

conduct be examined, not by the standard of evangelical purity, but even according to that moderate and low standard of morality which is current among the multitude in every Christian country, it will be found disfigured by the most disgusting blemishes. From this charge neither Plato, Xenophon, nor even Socrates himself, can justly be exempted.

153. 25.

The superiority of the true God could never be established by a comparison of his power in the distribution of future and invisible rewards and punishments, &c.] In relation to this subject, the following remarks of Maimonides are highly deserving of attention. We are to observe respecting this writer, that it forms a leading part of his design in the work from which the following extract is taken, to explain the reasons of various provisions in the ritual of the Law. This he does, by a regard to the idolatrous usages which prevailed in the world at the time when the Law was given, and which may therefore reasonably be supposed to have been had in contemplation in a code, which was designed to separate his nation from their observance and infection. The source of information on which he chiefly relies for a knowledge of the religious customs of the ancient idolaters, consists of certain ancient books descriptive of the Zabian superstition; a form of superstition which appears to have prevailed in ancient times almost throughout the whole world, and especially among those eastern nations which were situated in the vicinity of the chosen people°. This authority, indeed, however creditable, is the less important in relation to the value of the following quotation: because the manners and opinions therein described, are so exactly consonant with those of which we gain a knowledge from the writers of heathen antiquity in general, that they may seem almost to constitute a part of the essence of an idolatrous creed and worship.

“If you consider,” says he, “the ancient opinions of the Zabii, you will find it to have been an acknowledged principle with them, that the worship of the stars was the means of prospering the cultivation of the earth and procuring its fertility. Hence it was a part of the public instruction of their wise, and learned, and religious

° See Spencer de Legg. lib. ii. c. 1. and Maimonidis More Nev. p. iii. c. 29.

“ men, that the success of those agricultural labours by
 “ which mankind are sustained and preserved, depended
 “ on their own will: that is to say, that their labours
 “ would prosper, if they worshipped the sun and other
 “ heavenly bodies with the adoration which was due to
 “ them; but that, if they offended them by their sins, their
 “ cities and fields would be laid waste.—Of these promises
 “ they had a great variety: as for instance, that they would
 “ enjoy long life; that they should be free from diseases;
 “ that they should be preserved from great crimes; that
 “ the earth should yield her increase; and that their trees
 “ should be fruitful even beyond the supply of their wants.
 “ These are the words of the Zabii. When therefore these
 “ opinions had been widely propagated and taken deep
 “ root among mankind, it pleased the great and good God,
 “ out of his boundless mercy to our nation, to eradicate
 “ these errors from our minds, and to liberate our bodies
 “ from the servitude of those laborious and useless cere-
 “ monies which were thus prescribed. Thus he gave us
 “ his Law by the hand of Moses, who declared to us in
 “ the name of God, that if we should worship the stars
 “ and the heavenly bodies, the rain should *cease*, the land
 “ should be *barren*, the trees should *not* yield their fruit;
 “ that various evils should happen to our lives and dis-
 “ eases to our bodies; and finally that our lives should be
 “ shortened by premature death. For all these things are
 “ the words of the covenant which God made with us, and
 “ you will find them scattered through every part of our
 “ Law: that is to say, that the worship of the stars should
 “ be followed by the *want* of rain, the *desolation* of the
 “ land, unfavourable seasons, sickness, and premature
 “ death; and on the other hand, that the abandonment
 “ of that worship and conversion to the worship of God,
 “ should be followed by the falling of rain, the fruitfulness
 “ of the land, favourable seasons, health, and long life.
 “ All of this was in contradiction to the worshippers of
 “ idols, who, by holding forth the allurements we have
 “ mentioned, endeavoured to seduce men to idolatry. For
 “ it is a foundation of our Law to eradicate that doctrine
 “ from the minds of men, and to extirpate the memory of
 “ it.”

The foregoing statement will justly be regarded as the

P More Nevochim, p. iii. c. 30. See also p. iii. c. 37. The same view of the subject occurs in Men. ben Israel de Res. l. i. c. 13. p. 97.

more valuable, when we remark its agreement with the following extract from the prophet Hosea, which it also contributes to illustrate. "And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for *she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord* ⁹."

215. 1.

"There is yet another circumstance of some weight which is remarked by Parkhurst, and is also noticed by Castalio, Dathe, and Rosenmuller, although they have not drawn from it the natural inference; namely, that חַסְדָּא, which is feminine, is here connected with a word of the masculine gender, חַסְדָּא; which, as Parkhurst judiciously observes, is perfectly consistent, on the supposition that חַסְדָּא denotes a *sin-offering*: for then according to a construction common in Hebrew, which refers the adjective not to the word but to the *thing* understood

“ by it, the masculine *רַבֵּץ* is here combined with the *animal*, which was to be the sin-offering. In conformity with this reasoning it will be found, that *קָטַר* in other parts of Scripture where it is used for a *sin-offering*, is, though feminine itself, connected with a masculine adjunct. See Exod. xxix. 14. Levit. iv. 21. 24. v. 9. and other places of Levit. where the masculine pronoun *הוא* is used instead of the feminine *היא*. But in Gen. xviii. 20. xx. 9. Exod. xxxii. 21. 30. and other places, where the word occurs in its original signification of *sin*, it has constantly the adjective connected, in the *feminine*.” Magee on Atonement, Diss. lxvii. vol. 2. pp. 244, 245.

216. 21.

Among the various objections which have been advanced against the Divine institution of sacrifice, we think it proper to notice one which may be stated as follows: Sacrifice cannot reasonably be supposed to have originated in Divine institution, because, if it had, we cannot doubt that Scripture would have so informed us. To which we may reply by substituting, in the argument thus stated, the word *human* for *Divine*: after which the reasoning will be at least equally good, though the conclusion will be contrary. The objection thus framed proceeds upon the alleged silence of the holy Scriptures. Now admitting, for the present, the truth of the position on which it is grounded, it must still appear, that the silence of Scripture is, to make the most of it, a silence of neutrality, and that it militates as strongly against the human, as against the Divine, institution. We may even contend further, that if sacrifice had sprung from the invention of man, it was most important that mankind should have been informed of the fact: since the information thus afforded would have been in its own nature most effectually counteractive of those mistaken opinions respecting the value, the efficacy, and the perpetuity, of the sacrificial rite, which in later times presented among the Jewish nation a great obstacle to the reception of the Gospel.

But when it is contended, that the Divine institution of sacrifice, in regard to its earliest observance, is not made known in the Scriptures, we apprehend, that a position is advanced which will upon due inquiry prove to be false. For, if we admit the view which has been exhibited^r of God's

expostulation with Cain, and the correctness of the amended translation which has been insisted upon as necessary to convey the true sense of the original; it must then appear that the sin-offering is referred to by God himself as an appointed means of worship and expiation. If it be said, that the appointment of it is not communicated in a direct and explicit manner with relation to the time of its first introduction: it is to be considered, that the indirect communication of an important fact, with reference to some particular occasion which calls for the notice of it, is often preferred, as more striking, to the more regular and chronological style of narrative. Again, we are to consider, that the act of consecrating the blood of victims to the purpose of expiation is declared by God himself to be his own act. "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls^s." These words, unaccompanied as they are by any information given for the purpose of obviating such a construction, would naturally be understood to denote the Divine appointment of the subject to which they relate. That which is said to have been given by God for a particular purpose, cannot reasonably be viewed as having been first appropriated to that use by the voluntary act and excogitation of man. Let it not be said that the words relate exclusively to the Law of the Israelites. The Law which they explain was a part of the universal law of mankind, given to Noah for the observance of his posterity: and the law, as given to Noah, is expressed in a manner which indicates that the reason of its enactment was in both instances the same. If therefore the blood of victims were given to the Israelites by God as the means of expiation, it seems reasonable to infer, that it was also given by him to all mankind for the same purpose. On this point, as it will be the subject of future remark, we shall not further insist at present.

It has however been contended, that sacrifice rests on no ground of Divine authority, except only so far as it forms a provision of the Mosaic law; and that, viewed even as a provision of that law, it has its origin in permission and compliance only, not in command. In addition to the remarks we have already offered for the confutation of this opinion, we deem it important to specify further certain scriptural facts which are wholly repugnant to it. With this view we refer in the first place to an instance of its

^s Levit. xvii. 11.

observance on the part of a man who "was perfect and upright, who feared God, and eschewed evil," and who, most undeniably, was not in any way a subject of that law. "And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually^t." Here we may be told, that the existence of the rite proves nothing further than permission, and that the acceptableness of it evinces only God's condescension to the weakness of his creatures. What can be said then, when in the same book an instance presents itself, in which the observance of sacrifice is prescribed by God himself; and in which the injunction is addressed to those who were not, any more than Job himself, subjects to the ritual of Moses? "And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job^u."

223. 22.

Such then are the essential characters of the Levitical sacrifice. The guilt of the worshipper is emblematically imputed to the victim: to the victim also is emblematically transferred the punishment which had been incurred: hence there results that atonement, which, by virtue of the Divine appointment, renders the sinner capable of pardon.] The general principles thus applied to the interpretation of the Levitical sacrifices, having been encountered by a variety of objections, we deem it important to notice the most considerable of them.

I. It is alleged that the notion of atonement, as it is de-

^t Job i. 4, 5.

^u Job xlii. 7, 8.

scribed above, does not convey the proper idea of it, as conveyed generally in Scripture, and more especially in the Mosaic law : since atonements are therein spoken of as being effected by means very different from sacrifice. Thus we meet with atonements which are made by the payment of money^x, by the burning of incense^y, and by a signal act of zeal for the honour of God^z. Now as these various means are all spoken of as effectual towards the atonement for sin, it is contended, that the strict and proper signification of the term cannot be that which has been affixed to it in relation to sacrifice.

But this objection can have no force, when it is considered, that the restriction of the term atonement, as a scriptural term, to the single instance of sacrifice, is not contended for. The term itself being properly employed to denote *the procurement of pardon* ; or, according to the strict acceptation of the Hebrew word which it represents, the *covering* of sin^a: it may justly be applied to other means and ordinances to which, by the Divine will, the power of obtaining pardon may have been annexed. That is to say : We contend not that the virtue of atonement, agreeably to the proper and primitive meaning of the word, *does not* belong to other things as means of instrumental and conditional efficacy for propitiating the Deity : but that it *does* essentially belong to the ordinance of sacrifice. And further, with regard to the sacrificial, as distinguished from other atonements, we contend, that its specific nature consists in being effected by the emblematical transfer of guilt and punishment from the transgressor to the victim : a species of atonement being thus constituted, which must in its own nature be essentially confined to the sacrificial ordinance.

II. A second objection is grounded on those cases, in which, though they involve no degree of moral delinquency or transgression, it is nevertheless required by the Law that a sacrificial atonement should be made. Such for instance are the cases of leprosy and child-bearing. How, it may be said, could the imputation of sin be transferred where no sin existed ; and how could punishment be transferred, where none was equitably due ? To which we reply, that the ceremony thus prescribed conveyed an information, that sin *did* exist, and that punishment *was* equitably

^x Exod. xxx. 12—16.

^z Num. xxv. 7, 8, 13.

^y Num. xvi. 46, 47.

^a Magee on Atonement, vol. i. p. 300.

due : an information which might be highly needful to the individuals concerned, but which they probably would not have obtained, had they not, by the law which enjoined this ceremonial, been instructed in the fact, and required to humble themselves before God in a penitent confession of it. This, I conceive, is the inference we are bound to draw from considering the scriptural character of sacrificial atonements, as it relates to the above cases : instead of inferring with the objector, that such character has not been correctly represented, because the cases now alleged do not appear to him to square with the representation. We will here avail ourselves of the considerations suggested, in reference to this subject, by archbishop Magee : which we shall state, however, with some little deviation from his own words. “ Let it be considered, that the “ pains of child-bearing, and all diseases of the human “ body, (of which leprosy in the eastern countries was “ deemed the most grievous,) being the signal consequences “ of that apostasy, which had entailed these calamities on “ the children of Adam, it would be proper, on occasion of “ a deliverance from these remarkable effects of sin, that “ there should be this sensible representation of that death, “ which was the desert of it in general, and an humble “ acknowledgment of that personal demerit, which had “ actually exposed the offerer on so many occasions to the “ severest punishment ^b.” We may add, in illustration of the salutary tendency of such appointments, that the persons of whom their observance was required, were thereby guarded from supposing, that sufferings and calamities could ever, by the appointment of a wise and merciful Creator, be the portion allotted to them in the character of innocent and unoffending beings : and consequently guarded at the same time from arrogating to themselves a meritorious character in the eye of their God. The bloody ceremonial of sacrifice taught and reminded them, in the most awful manner, that the wages of sin is death : and while this lesson was impressed on their minds, they would be so far from contemplating, as the portion of innocence, the pains and diseases from which they were liberated, that they would be made acquainted, that their punishment had been far less than their iniquities had deserved ^c.

^b On Atonement, vol. i. p. 337.

^c If, indeed, the opinions of the ancient Israelites might be gathered from those of their modern descendants, we might say, that the view which is here

The case, indeed, of deliverance after childbirth, seems to call for more particular remark. I would ask then : Could it be matter of wonder to any Israelite that this should be a fit occasion for sacrificial expiation, when the sacred record in which the laws of his nation were embodied, informed him of that specific malediction, which had been pronounced on the first woman by reason of a transgression, which had justly incurred the rigid penalty of immediate death ? *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.*

On the whole then we maintain, that these and all other cases of sacrifice are to be interpreted according to that fundamental and scriptural principle : " It is the blood " that maketh atonement FOR THE SOUL." We maintain also that in these, as in other cases, it is sin, and no other cause, which renders the atonement necessary. Nor do we feel it necessary to recede from the maintenance of these principles, even if sacrificial cases should be alleged, to which we cannot readily discover the propriety of their application. For it will appear on examining the Mosaic ritual, that the expiation of sacrifice was prescribed in a variety of instances, *not because such instances involved in themselves any wilful transgression of a Divine Law, but because they furnished occasions on which the Divine wisdom judged it proper that a remembrance of sin should be made, together with a confession of guilt, and an acknow-*

taken of these sacrificial cases is precisely the same with that of the people to whom the Law was given ; and might therefore reasonably contend, that it is that which would most naturally and obviously occur from considering the provisions and principles of the Law itself. The general doctrine of the rabbins in regard to all temporal sufferings is thus laid down by Maimonides : " Non est mors sine peccato, neque castigatio sine iniquitate." M. N. P. iii. c. 24. p. 406. That all cases of legal defilement, even those which were *involuntary*, such as leprosy and childbearing, uniformly implied an idea of *guilt*, is stated by Magee (Diss. 33. vol. i. p. 245.) to be the opinion of every Jewish writer of eminence. In illustration of this opinion he adduces the following citations. Abarbanel says, that " without committing sin no one " is ever exposed to suffering ; that it is a principle with the Jewish doctors, " that there is no pain without crime, and that therefore the woman who had " endured the pains of childbirth, was required to offer a piacular sacrifice." The same rabbinical writer is cited as saying : " the leper must consider his " malady as a judicial infliction for some transgression." And the doctrine of the rabbi Bechai on the subject of the sacrifice prescribed to the puerpera is stated as follows : " that the woman after childbirth is bound to bring a " sin-offering, in expiation of that original taint, derived from the common " mother of mankind, by whose transgression it was caused, that the pro- " creation of the species was not like the production of the fruits of the earth, " spontaneous and unmixed with sensual feelings." See Outram de Sacr. l. i. c. xii. §. 6, 7.

ledgment of the penalty which had been incurred by it. Our remarks on the cases of the puerpera and the leper may suffice to shew, that these might properly be viewed as presenting *occasions* such as we now describe. Other instances may be advanced, in which the same occasional propriety would exist, though it may now be undiscoverable to us. For it is to be considered, that the provisions of the Mosaic Law were framed with a view to temporary and changing circumstances; and that the circumstances to which they were primarily adapted are, in great part, blotted out of the memory of mankind^d. Thus the reasons of the Mosaic Law might be, in many instances, sufficiently understood at the time of its promulgation, and yet those reasons will, in the same instances, be wholly unintelligible to us.

The case of the Nazarite polluted with the dead^e, may be viewed as a proper subject for the application of the remarks we have just made. It is one of the cases embraced in the objection which we are now considering: nor is it capable of so ready an explanation as that which occurs in relation to the two cases of childbirth and leprosy. We might therefore content ourselves with simply regarding this, as one of those occasions on which a sacrificial remembrance of sin was proper; though we may be unacquainted with those particulars, in the circumstances and usages of the ancient world, which constituted the grounds of its being so regarded.

Still, however, even in this case, it may not be altogether impossible to suggest a consideration partly available towards the solution of the difficulty. With this view, we will quote a remark contained in Dr. Spencer's work on the Ritual Laws of the Hebrews. The purpose of the writer being to shew, that the Law of Moses was in various instances framed on a design of contravening the doctrines and practices of the idolatrous worship prevalent at the time of its promulgation, he observes: "It is not

^d "Omnia [Legis] præcepta, tam negativa quam affirmativa, quorum nobis ratio est occulta, nihil aliud sunt quam Remedia et Medicinæ morborum quorundam illius temporis [quo Lex data est], qui ad nostram scientiam (Deo sit laus) non pervenerunt." Maimonidis More Nev. p. iii. c. 49. "Sic itaque omnia reliqua, quorum rationem ignoras, suas tamen validas habent causas et rationes, adeoque sequuntur fundamentum illud, de quo nos Sapientes nostri monuerunt; *Nihil est inter vos frustra: quod si autem frustra est aliquid*, (h. e. vobis ita esse videtur,) *id ex vobis est*, (h. e. ex vestra imperfectione et ignorantia.)" Id. ibid. c. 50.

^e Num. vi.

“improbable that God may have provided that the un-
 “cleanness derived from the dead might frequently occur,
 “continue long, and not be obviated without labour and
 “trouble, *in order that he might exterminate the prevalent*
 “*superstition of the heathen in regard to the dead.* For
 “with them it was usual to venerate the dead with divine
 “worship, to partake of their sacred rites, to pass whole
 “nights in their sepulchres, to expect their oracular re-
 “sponses in cases of difficulty, and to rank them among
 “the gods. Now by the Law it was required, that even
 “the touch of the dead, of a bone or a tomb, nay, the
 “mere presence of a corpse, should affect all persons and
 “things with so great a defilement, that it could not be
 “removed, except by repeated washings, by sprinkling the
 “water of purification, and by an abstinence of seven days
 “from the sacred services of religion. Hence the Israel-
 “ites would necessarily learn to discard the doctrines of
 “the Gentiles respecting the sanctity and divinity of their
 “deceased heroes, and their superstitious practices and
 “feelings in regard to the dead would be wholly erad-
 “cated^f.”

The above may be considered as not an improbable reason, why, in the case of an ordinary Israelite, the Law should impute so great a defilement to a person who had touched a dead body. Why then should it be thought extraordinary, that, in the case of a Nazarite, whose profession required a much higher degree of sanctity, a sacrificial atonement should be required as the means of reinstating him in his former condition of ceremonial purity?

This view of the subject will appear the more consistent and probable, if we suppose with Tostatus, as quoted by Spencers, that the sacrificial atonement required of the Nazarite, and the lesser lustration prescribed for the ordinary Israelite, on the same common occasion of pollution by the dead, had the same primary design and meaning: that is to say, that the expiation of sacrifice was in both cases alike required for the removal of the defilement, but that the greater and fuller expiation was called for in the case of the Nazarite as a more signal instance of pollution, while in the less considerable instances it was allowed that the defilement should be cleansed by sprinkling the water of separation which was mixed with the ashes of the burnt heifer: the only difference between the two cases being,

^f Spencer de Legg. pp. 205, 206.

‡ De Legg. lib. ii. c. 26. §. 5. p. 502.

that on the more solemn occasion a victim was specially slain with reference to that particular case, but that on the more ordinary occasion one general victim was allowed to avail for the purpose of expiation to the whole congregation, whenever proper cases for its application might arise: the requisition of the Law being thus framed, in order to mitigate the burdensome and expensive nature of those numerous sacrifices, which would otherwise have been required by the frequent occurrence of accidental pollutions. The exposition thus proposed will justly be entitled to considerable respect, when we consider that the apostle to the Hebrews^h has mentioned *the ashes of the heifer sprinkling the unclean*, as having, in common with *the blood of bulls and of goats*, a reference and an analogy to the precious sacrifice of the blood of Christ.

The foregoing remarks may serve to simplify the subject by shewing, that the two cases of defilement to which they relate may not improperly be viewed as having been placed in the ritual of the Israelites on the same footing, and may thus obviate any difficulty which might arise from viewing the different prescriptions of that ritual in relation to them. Regarding them, then, in common, as cases in which a sacrificial expiation was alike prescribed by the Law, we may thus apply to them those leading principles for which we contend in relation to the general interpretation of sacrifice. The accidental touch or presence of a corpse was not in itself an unfit occasion of awakening a remembrance, that death had been the penalty incurred by man's transgression: and the selection of such an incident as a suitable occasion for the sacrificial solemnity would at the same time be strikingly counteractive of those superstitions respecting the dead, which, according to the opinion of the learned writer whom we quoted above, this part of the ritual law was especially designed to suppress.

But be this as it may, whatever difficulty belong to the case considered in itself, it is no difficulty which affects our general position that the sacrificial atonement was always required for sin, and in no case without it: for the text which prescribes this atonement plainly declares the reason of its necessity to be *sin*. "The priest—shall make an atonement for him, *for that he sinned* by the deadⁱ." The difficulty then belonging to the case is, not that an atonement for sin should be required where no sin is im-

^h Chap. ix. 13, 14.

ⁱ Num. vi. 11.

puted, for we plainly perceive that sin *was* imputed; but that sin should be imputed in a case where we do not readily discover wherein it consisted.

With this latter difficulty we are, while vindicating the doctrine of sacrifice, in no degree concerned. If it be admitted, in relation to a case where the Law required a sacrificial expiation, that it was also a case in which the same Law imputed sin: this must surely suffice to warrant the application to such case of those principles which have been maintained in relation to sacrifice in general. But with regard to the difficulty thus arising, it may not be amiss to propose the following brief considerations. That sin should be imputed in cases distinct from those of wilful transgression, may naturally be explained by a regard to the genius of the Levitical law; in which moral delinquency and ceremonial defilement are included in one common character of unfitness for the sacred service of religion. Nor can such a system be viewed as in any degree repugnant to the divine attributes of justice and mercy: since the imputation of sin was attached to the act, only till such time as the stain was effaced by the prescribed expiation; it was in all cases occasioned by occurrences, which could not have happened to the party concerned but for the introduction and prevalence of sin in the world, and his own participation of it; and lastly, the subjects to whom it was imputed were those who, not merely at the time of the occurrence, but during their whole lives, were, by reason of personal and actual sin, the just subjects of divine condemnation.

III. A third objection is grounded on those cases in which sacrificial atonements are required for inanimate things. Thus we read of atonements for the altar^k, for the holy sanctuary^l, and for the tabernacle^m. In these instances it is plain, that the subjects for which atonement is declared to be necessary, are alike incapable of sin and punishment: it is therefore maintained, that an emblematical transfer of either is a notion which cannot apply to such cases, nor by consequence (inasmuch as the sacrificial character is confessed by the same in the latter) to those other instances in which we contend for its existence.

We answer thus. The principles to which we must resort for the explanation of sacrifice, in every instance,

^k Ex. xxix. 37. Lev. xvi. 33.

^l Lev. xvi. 33.

^m Ibid.

are those which are afforded in the divine word. "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soulⁿ." From this passage more especially, aided by the concurrent tenor of the Levitical code, we feel ourselves entitled to insist upon the following principles, as the leading principles of interpretation in relation to the sacrificial ordinance: namely, that the life of the victim is substituted in the place of the life which is forfeited to justice; that the atonement thus made is made only *for the soul*; and that the *sin* or transgression of a moral agent is the only cause which renders such atonement necessary.

The above are clear and simple principles, furnished by divine authority for the explanation of ordinances which were confessedly of divine appointment. As such, we contend that they ought never to be lost sight of, in the estimate we may form of any of those ordinances to which they relate. We feel ourselves entitled to insist further: *That if any sacrificial cases of dubious or difficult interpretation should occur, we are to fix and determine the character of such cases to an agreement with the principles thus laid down; but that such cases are on no account to be brought forward in contradiction of principles clearly and expressly furnished by the Divine word and authority.* That is to say, the principles are to be applied to the explanation of the cases; not the cases alleged in denial of the principles. This we have a right to claim, on the ground of that indispensable rule of scripture interpretation and of all good reasoning, which requires us to apply things which are in themselves plain and easy to the elucidation of those which are difficult, and not to allege obscurities for the contradiction and embarrassment of perspicuous truths. A rule too much despised, indeed, by some theologians: to whom the character of an ancient sect of philosophy, as we find it in Cicero, may justly be applied; "Vos, cum perspicuis dubia debeatis illustrare, *"dubiis perspicua conamini tollere"*."

With regard more particularly to the present objection, we trust we shall make it appear, that the principles above stated have a natural and easy application to each of the

ⁿ Lev. xvii. 11.

^o Cic. de Fin. iv.

cases which it embraces, and to whatever similar cases it may be possible to allege.

For, under the guidance of these fundamental principles we say, that sacrifice has in all cases a primary regard to *persons*. If at any time it is spoken of as offered for *inanimate things*, to them it has only an *indirect* relation: while it has at the same time a *direct* relation to some offender, or offenders, for whom atonement is made. The atonement is made for, or *on account of*, the thing, by reason of some defilement or desecration which it may have contracted from its association with the person: but the victim is slain for, or *in substitution for*, the person, and to him only does the vicarious import of the sacrifice relate. The atonement being thus made for the person, the defilement, of which he had been the cause, is removed: and the thing, thus purified, becomes reinstated in its fitness for sacred and holy purposes.

In confirmation of the above remarks, we have to observe, lastly, that the explanation they propose is, we conceive, precisely the same with that which the sacred text itself supplies in relation to the cases which furnish the matter of the present objection. It is required for instance of Aaron, that he shall make an atonement for the holy place: and why? The reason is immediately subjoined in these words: "*because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins^p.*" He is to do the same for the tabernacle of the congregation, "*that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness^q.*" Again, when he is required to make an atonement for the altar, it is said that he shall "*cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel^r.*"

On the ground of those considerations which have now been offered, I feel myself compelled by the sacred importance of religious truth, though with great reluctance, and, I trust, with becoming humility, to differ from that excellent prelate^s, who, by his work on Atonement and Sacrifice, has contributed the most vigorous and effectual support to the cause of vital Christianity. That distinguished writer is not indeed chargeable with a disposition to make unguarded concessions to the adversaries of a sound and orthodox faith. Yet I cannot but think that

^p Lev. xvi. 16.

^q Ibid.

^r Lev. xvi. 18, 19.

^s Abp. Magee.

something like a dangerous concession appears, when, with regard to the cases comprised in this and the foregoing objection, he *distinguishes* such sacrifices from others which are "of a nature *strictly* propitiatory^t:" when, in reference to the same subject he admits, that "there were sacrifices " which were *not vicarious*, inasmuch as there were some " that were *not for sin*:" and when he allows that " in " these cases, *moral character could have no concern*," and that "the purifying rite of atonement was enjoined, to " render both things and persons worthy and approved instruments of the Divine worship^x." Here, as we conceive, the simplicity of the sacrificial system is embarrassed with an unnecessary distinction: the language employed is irreconcilable with that great and fundamental principle which declares, that it is the blood that maketh atonement FOR THE SOUL: and the same language is equally at variance with those declarations of the sacred text, by which we are taught, that it was the uncleanness, the sins, and the iniquities, of the children of Israel, which created the necessity of an atonement for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar.

IV. It is objected, that the characters we have ascribed to sacrifice could not belong to it, because sacrifices are not confined to piacular cases, but were also offered in others which were eucharistical. On this circumstance Dr. Sykes lays the greatest stress, as a proof of error in the construction of the rite of laying the hand on the head of the victim, when it is interpreted to denote the emblematical transfer of sin from the offender to the victim^y. In answer to this, we must again insist upon the necessity of interpreting these eucharistical sacrifices agreeably to the principles supplied to us by Scripture, and must again protest against the allegation of such sacrifices for the purpose of contradicting principles laid down by Divine authority. Let these principles be applied to the cases thus objected: the only consequence of such application will be the following; namely, that the legal worshipper was

^t On Atonement, p. 36. vol. i.

^u Ibid. p. 336.

^x Ibid. p. 303.

^y His words are: "This cannot be the meaning of this ceremony, because " the same thing was done when confession of sins was not made: for it " was not only in piacular cases that this rite was used, but in eucharistical " sacrifices where praise and thanksgiving were used, and *where translation " of guilt was not thought of*." Essay on Sacrifices, p. 26. But when it is said, that translation of guilt was not thought of in these cases, what is this but begging the question? We contend, on the contrary, the proper inference to be, that it *was* thought of.

not permitted to hold any intercourse, even of praise and thanksgiving, with his Maker, which was not accompanied by the remembrance and confession of sin; that, while acknowledging the Divine bounty, he was reminded of his own unworthiness; and thus taught to acknowledge, that the favours he had experienced were conferred upon one who had merited that death of which he beheld the representation. Surely in this view of the case there is nothing unnatural, nor any thing harsh and unreasonable in the mode of deduction by which we arrive at it.

V. It is again alleged, that a sacrificial atonement is spoken of in Scripture as being effected by an oblation of inanimate matter; that to this oblation the vicarious import cannot be ascribed; nor by consequence to the other instances of sacrificial atonement; since a common character belongs to it and to them.

Of such oblations there is indeed one instance^z to which a piacular virtue is annexed; but it is an instance of such a kind, that the exception which it supplies is auxiliary to the establishment of the general rule. In this case, an offering of fine flour is expressly prescribed as *a substitute for*, and *a representative of*, the victim which the poverty of the offerer renders him unable to provide. For, with regard to the transgression for which expiation is required, the Law enjoins in the first instance, that the oblation should consist of a lamb or a kid: if the offender were too poor to bring a lamb, then a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons were to be offered in the place of it: “but if,” says the sacred code, “he be not able to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him^a.” Hence it plainly appears, that as the primary requisition of the Law was impossible, the offerer must in this case, to use the language of Mæge, have been either “shut out from all legal communion

^z Lev. v. 11.

^a Lev. v. 11, 12, 13.

“with his God, or indulged in this inferior sort of offering.” We may add, agreeably to the same excellent writer, that the offering being in part burnt and destroyed on the altar, might naturally be viewed as a symbol and representation of the destruction due to his own demerits. “And to all this it may be added, that this individual might be taught to look to the animal sacrifices, offered for *all the sins of all the people* on the day of atonement, for the full and complete consummation of those less perfect atonements, which alone he had been able to make ^b.”

The above are all the objections which seem particularly to call for attention in a work, in which the subject of sacrifice is treated only as a point of subordinate inquiry. As we have however lately had occasion to mention Dr. Sykes as an objector to the construction we put on a part of the sacrificial ceremony, it may not be uninteresting to notice that construction which he has himself attached to it. We are to remember that this ceremony and its import is described, in the solemnity of the day of Expiation, thus: “Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, *putting them upon the head of the goat*.” This we construe to denote *an emblematical transfer of guilt*. Dr. Sykes, having objected to this construction, (on the ground of those eucharistical occasions on which, in common with piacular, the ceremony is employed,) afterwards declares his own view of the ceremony by describing it as “the formal act by which the offerer transferred his property to the use of the altar ^d!” Is this intended as a contradiction of the above cited words of scripture, or an exposition of them? If the latter, it furnishes a most happy example of that system of interpretation by virtue of which every form of words may be made to carry any signification which it may be convenient to assign to them.

227. 1.

Sacrifice, according to the view of Dr. Spencer, was introduced into the ordinances of the Mosaic Law, only as an act of concession to the weakness of the Israelites: who, according to the same view, had become, at the time

^b Magee on Atonement, Diss. xxxviii. vol. i. p. 340.

^c Lev. xvi. 21.

^d Essay on Sacrifices, p. 31.

when their Law was given, so inveterately addicted to its observance in consequence of long association with idolaters, that they would, if the indulgence had been denied them as a part of the worship of the true God, have obstinately maintained it in an adherence to the idolatrous worship of false deities. Though we feel it unnecessary, after the remarks which have already been offered, to enter on a distinct confutation of this extravagant proposition, we think it not unimportant to subjoin a specimen of the evidence which has been offered in its support. It is asserted by this learned writer, that no precepts relating to sacrifice were delivered by God to the Israelites, until after they had offered sacrifice to the Golden Calf, and had thus given the most evident proofs of a mind enslaved to the usages of the heathen^e! To the same effect we find Dr. Sykes asserting: "As to the rites and ceremonies relative to burnt offerings and the other sacrifices, *they were not commanded till after the affair of the golden calf had shewn, how prone that people was to idolatry, and to the religious practices of Egypt*^f." To find declarations like the above, so boldly advanced in flat contradiction to the plain narrative of scripture, may well occasion the utmost astonishment. For if we refer to that narrative, we shall find that the apostasy of the Golden Calf did not occur until after precepts and instructions relating to every considerable part of the sacrificial ritual had been very copiously delivered. Not to insist upon the ordinance of the passover, we find, Ex. xx. 24, 25. a general command given with regard to various sacrifices, relating to which more detailed instructions are given in the following parts of the Pentateuch: Ex. xxii. 20. a prohibition of offering sacrifice to any other than the true God: Ex. xxiii. 18. a law that the blood of sacrifices should not be offered with leavened bread: Ex. xxix. the sacrifices prescribed at the consecra-

* "Quamquam loci plurimi de hostiis immolaudis, legum formam et speciem præ se ferentes, in Pentateucho reperiuntur: vix in legum proprie dictarum census admitti debent, cum apertum sit leges illas e populi pertinenacia potius, quam Dei voluntate et intentione primaria profluxisse. *Deus enim præcepta nulla de sacrificio tradidit, nisi postquam populus vitulum sacrificio coluisset, et animi ritibus ethnicis addicti documenta dedisset apertissima.* Adeo ut Deus non sponte, sed veluti coactus, victimas instituisse, et sacrificandi leges Hebræorum genti simul et Necessitati dedisse putetur. Leges autem non tam datæ quam extortæ, sunt populi potius acta quam principis, et inter permissa magis quam præcepta numerandæ." De Legg. p. 744. The same assertion is many times repeated in the course of Dr. Spencer's ponderous work.

^f Essay on Sacrifices, p. 252.

tion of the priests, and the law relating to the continual burnt offering of the Lamb, daily morning and evening ; lastly, Ex. xxx. 10. we find an ordinance relating to the sin offering of the great day of expiation. All these are anterior in order of time to that idolatrous defection recorded Ex. xxxii. which is contended by Spencer, Sykes, and other theologians, to have furnished the sole occasion and reason of appointing the ordinance of sacrifice as a part of the Mosaic Law. The subject will be further illustrated by a reference to Ex. iii. 18. v. 3. viii. 25—32. x. 24—26.

228. 13.

Such an injunction at any earlier period would have been nugatory, since this is the date of the first permission of animal food.] This position having been questioned, we feel it incumbent upon us, by reason of its importance as a medium of proof in relation to the general doctrine maintained in the chapter upon sacrifice, to notice the objections which have been advanced against it.

In adverting to this subject, we cannot but lament that stubborn and captious pertinacity of opposition, with which, in relation to the doctrine of sacrifice as viewed in connexion with the doctrine of atonement, the legitimate progress of argument has been impeded. There is no theological question to which this complaint is more applicable. However smooth and direct, under the guidance of scriptural light, the path of investigation may be, yet it is a path in which not the slightest advances are to be made, without the continual necessity of clearing away those obstructions, which have been created, not by the difficulty of the subject, but by the ingenuity of controversial resistance. The clearest positions of human knowledge, though otherwise allowed with unhesitating consent, are found highly problematical and dubious when applied to this question : in like manner, facts, which heretofore were universally acknowledged, are for the first time denied ; and terms, of which the meaning was universally agreed upon, are for the first time found to have been misunderstood ; when insisted upon with a view to the same application. Of the justice of this charge an estimate may be formed from considering the following objection.

It is observed by Curcellæus §, “ that he does not remember to have read a single theologian, ancient or mo-

§ Diatriba de Esu Sanguinis, c. 1.

“denn, Jew or Christian, who thought that animals either were, or lawfully might be, slain for food before the fall of Adam.” What however was unknown till the time of this writer, was no longer so in the following century : since Dr. Sykes has undertaken to prove, that both the lawfulness and the reality of the practice are to be dated from the creation of man. In order to the developement of his argument, it will be right in the first place to introduce the two following quotations from Scripture.

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed ; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat : and it was so.” Gen. i. 29, 30.

“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea ; into your hand are they delivered. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given you all things.*” Gen. ix. 2, 3.

The first of these citations is commonly adduced as a proof, that animal food was not granted to Adam. Dr. Sykes however contends that it was permitted because it is not forbidden. “It was not,” observes he, “that this or that food was prohibited, or not to be eaten by man ; but to declare how well God had, in his infinite wisdom, provided for the numerous species of creatures which he had created^h.” The argument to the contrary being however much strengthened by the second of the above citations, (for otherwise the more extended grant which it contains would look only like a nugatory concession of that which had been lawfully enjoyed before) : his reply to it is framed in the following manner. First, it is contended that the term which is rendered “every moving thing,”

^h Essay on Sacrifices, p. 171. The value of this exposition is well illustrated by Delany in the following manner. “If a prince gave any man a grant of certain lands named in his patent, and mentioned in his grant, that this should be the estate : would any man in his senses believe, that he had a right to *any other* estate, by virtue of that grant ? or that he was not limited to the lands there expressly mentioned ?” &c. Rev. exam. with Candour, vol. ii. Diss. i. p. 30.

does not in the Hebrew signify every kind of animal, but only a class of them distinct from beast and fowls, namely, those which glide along without feet: that the meaning of this grant to Noah may therefore be quite consistent with men's having eaten sheep and bullocks from the beginning; and that the extension of the grant comprises only such animals as are not comprised under the terms, Beasts and Fowlsⁱ. On this reasoning we have to observe, after Magee, first, that the proposed exposition of the second of the above-cited passages, directly contradicts that which had been given of the former. "For if the grant to Adam was but a general declaration of abundant provision, and consequently leaving man at full liberty to use all creatures for food, why introduce a permission at this time respecting a particular species of creature^k?" Secondly, we must refer to the most irrefragable evidence adduced by the same learned writer^l to establish the correctness of the present version, and to prove most satisfactorily, that the term, of which the import is thus disputed, properly denotes not "a particular species of animals, but *all, of whatever kind, that move.*" It would be extending this note to an immoderate length, though otherwise an employment by no means devoid of interest and utility, if we were to enter into a detail of the proofs of our position respecting the first grant of animal food, and to combine with that detail an examination of the objections which have been raised against it. It will not however be unimportant to remark, that there are few propositions relating to the sacred history of the scriptures, which have been sanctioned by a more general agreement of all ancient writers both Jewish and Christian, than this^m: which seems indeed, till of late years, to have passed current as one of the most undisputed facts with which the sacred records present us. We may add, that a circumstance highly corroborative of the same truth, occurs in the tradition which is found to have prevailed very extensively in the ancient world, that the earliest race of mankind derived their subsistence wholly from the vegetable supplies of the earth. The subject with which we are now engaged has been largely discussed in the first three chapters of Curcellæus's *Diatriba de Esu Sanguinis*: to which the

ⁱ Essay on Sacr. pp. 171. et seqq.

^k On Atonement, vol. ii. p. 123.

^l Ibid. vol. ii. Diss. liii.

^m Magee on Atonement, vol. ii. p. 130. See also Curcellæi *Diatriba de Esu Sanguinis*, c. 2.

reader, who wishes for further information respecting it, is referred. It may also be observed, that Plutarch has left us two short treatises "On the eating of Fleshⁿ," which may be read with considerable interest on this subject, and will be found perhaps, as they illustrate the design of nature in the physical constitution of man, to throw some degree of light upon it. There is one argument advanced by this writer which seems so just, and which at the same time is commonly so little noticed in the discussion of this question, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. The purpose of the author being to prove, that man was not formed by nature with a view to his subsistence on the flesh of animals, he contends, that nature has left him wholly unprovided with the means of supplying himself with that kind of food. That is to say: Other carnivorous animals are furnished in the organical construction of their bodies with the means of obtaining their sustenance; but in the case of men, the means of slaying the animals they eat, of domesticating the tame, and of catching the wild, are almost wholly artificial, and could not have been employed till the arts of life had made considerable advancement. It must therefore follow, on the supposition that he had been formed with a view to that kind of food, that he must have been destitute of the means of obtaining it, until he had made such progress in civilization as to be in possession of those artificial means, of which the employment is found necessary for that purpose. The same author observes, that animal food is never used by man in its natural state, but always disguised by the operation of fire: which he alleges as a proof that nature has implanted in our species an aversion to it.

228. 27.

The prohibition itself is grounded on the expiatory design of sacrifice: but the date of the prohibition is occasioned by the simultaneous grant of animal food.] Two reasons different from that here specified have, however, been assigned, for the prohibition of blood to Noah and his descendants. These it will be incumbent on us to notice.

I. It is contended, that the grant of food to Noah was not a grant of animal food; for that had been lawfully eaten before; but that it is only the recognition of a right previously enjoyed, and that the design of it, viewed in con-

ⁿ Περὶ σαρκοφαγίας.

nexion with the prohibition which follows the grant, is, to convey, together with the confirmation of a previous grant, a command, that no flesh should be eaten but that of animals which had been previously slain. In other words its purport, according to this view of the subject, was, to prohibit the eating of flesh which was taken from any animal alive, and also of any animals which die of themselves^o.

Now with regard to the practice of eating the flesh cut from a living animal, we discover in it such a repugnance to the natural and common feelings of mankind, that we are at a loss to conceive how the prospect of its occurrence can have supplied the reason of a law enacted on so solemn an occasion. In the scriptural account of those very few commandments which were delivered to Noah and his sons, we find that many crimes more atrocious, more cruel, and, at the same time, more congenial to the depravity of our nature, are wholly unnoticed. We find from history and observation, that such more enormous crimes have become extremely prevalent among mankind: while the practice we are now considering has prevailed so little, that its mere existence is little better than dubious. The whole compass of scripture, though otherwise copious in describing the abominations of the heathen, furnishes not a single example of it. In the records of the ancient world, we find it attested only by very uncertain and questionable accounts^p. Its reality, as a monstrous singularity in the human character, is barely evinced by the testimony of modern travellers. It has indeed been contended, (on the authority of the rabbins, I believe,) that this practice formed a part of the wickedness of the antediluvian generations, and that the suppression of it was the object contemplated in this interdiction: a view of the subject which it will be time enough to controvert, when we have seen the evidence by which it is supported, since it is plain that such evidence neither has been, nor can be, adduced. Lastly we must insist with Curcellæus^q, (to whom we are partly indebted for the foregoing remarks,) on the utter

^o Sykes's Essay on Sacrifices, p. 176, 177.

^p Thus Maimonides (on the authority of the books which have been already described) mentions it as forming a part of the Zabian superstition. More Nev. P. iii. c. 48. p. 496. Diodorus Siculus also speaks of a tribe of Ethiopians, who fed on the flesh of the elephant while the animal was alive. iii. 25.

^q De Esu Sang. Opp. p. 951.

improbability, that a law, interdictive of a certain crime, should be framed in such language that it would be impossible for any man, without a considerable stretch of sagacity, to guess that the crime which it forbids might possibly be denoted by the terms which it employs.

As to the eating of any animal which dies of itself, that this is not the act proscribed in the present interdiction, will appear from hence : that such act was an offence only in relation to the ceremonial Law of the Israelites, but not forbidden, like the act we are now considering, to the sons of Noah in general, that is, to the rest of mankind^r.

II. It is maintained, that the prohibition of eating blood was designed to infuse into the minds of men a salutary dread of the guilt they would incur by shedding the blood of their fellow-creatures. This exposition of its design is framed on a view of the words which follow those in which it is contained. " But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man^s."

But it would be well if they, who employ themselves in assigning reasons for the Divine laws, would consider, whether the explanations proposed by them are worthy of the wisdom from which those laws emanate. In relation to the present case, it deserves consideration, whether we can discover any natural conduciveness in this particular provision towards the attainment of the end which is supposed to have been contemplated in the framing of it. Was it ever found, then, by experience, that the eating of blood, prevalent as the practice now is in the world, would harden the feelings of mankind so as to prepare their minds for the atrocity of murder ? Was a case ever known to arise, in which the horror of that dreadful crime was in the slightest degree aggravated by the consideration, that God had forbidden the eating of blood ? Was that consideration ever employed as a topic in depicting the guilt and enormity of that crime ? If we will duly consider the matter, I think we must acknowledge, that we can discover in the prohibition

^r " Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself : thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it ; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." Deut. xiv. 21.

^s Gen. ix. 4, 5, 6.

of eating blood no tendency whatever to the end which it is thus supposed to have had in view. If this be admitted, we ought, I think, to hesitate before we ascribe to the counsels of Divine wisdom a purpose, which it does not appear that such counsel was, in the nature of things, calculated to effect.

On the other hand, if we consider the occasion on which this primitive law against the murderer was enacted, we shall, I think, discover a much more rational explanation of its being thus found in close connexion with the prohibition of eating blood. For though in the practice of *eating* blood we cannot discover any tendency to divest the heart of man of its just and proper sentiments of tenderness for the life of a fellow creature, yet in the practice of *shedding* blood we may discover that tendency. Of this tendency an acknowledgment may be found in the generally prevailing opinion, that persons engaged in that occupation are, for that very reason, disqualified by our common law from sitting in judgment on the life of a fellow creature^t. Such being the case, we cannot but admit that the time of first granting to mankind the right of slaying animals for their food, was a seasonable occasion for providing some additional security for human life; and that the Divine wisdom may therefore now for the first time have judged it right to delegate to man that judicial power over the life of the murderer, which, during the whole course of the antediluvian world, he had reserved in his own hands.

Let it be considered then, whether the following may not justly be regarded as a reasonable and consistent view of the matter. We find, in connexion with the first grant of animal food to man, two laws enacted by the Divine wisdom. The first of these laws forbids the eating of blood: the second denounces a sanguinary retribution on the murderer. Both these laws, we contend, derive their occasion from the grant with which they are connected. In the first place, blood, being the vehicle of life and the sacred instrument of making atonement for the soul, is now for the first time forbidden to be eaten; because any previous interdiction to that effect would, at a time when men did not eat flesh nor slaughter animals for any other purpose than sacrifice, have been useless. Secondly, the

^t This is, I believe, nothing more than a vulgar error. The prevalence of the opinion, however erroneous, is sufficient for the argument here pursued.

life of man is now fenced with an additional security, in order to restrain that ferocity which would naturally be engendered by a transition from a state, in which they subsisted on the fruits of the earth, into a state, in which their sustenance would be obtained by the infliction of pain and death, and by the shedding of blood.

We will conclude this note by remarking, that as the law which forbids the eating of blood applied to the Gentile in common with the Israelite; so also is the reason of that law expressly and equally applied in scripture to both. For we find (Lev. xvii. 10—12.) that the reason given why both Israelite and Gentile were equally forbidden to eat blood, was, that the life of the flesh was in the blood, and it was appointed as the instrument of making atonement for the soul^u.

286. 2.

Because we are not to expect the narrative of Scripture, &c.] As a consideration illustrative of this remark, the following may not be wholly undeserving of notice. It is undeniable, that the doctrine of a future retribution was believed by the historian Josephus; that it was regarded by him as a doctrine of the Law; and as a doctrine which had always from the very earliest times been cherished in the belief of his countrymen. Of these points his writings afford the most incontestable evidence. Now although a copious account of the history of the Israelites is contained in his works, it is remarkable, that the passages which indicate the doctrine in question, are much less numerous than passages of the same class in the Scriptures. This, as we conceive, is only explained on the principle which has been offered in explanation of the alleged silence of the Scriptures in relation to the same subject and the same period: namely, that the nature of his subject and the course of his narrative did not naturally lead to the more frequent mention of it.

In order to evince the truth of the above remark, it will be useful to notice certain particulars which occur on a comparative view of the Scripture narrative and that of the Jewish historian. We find then various passages in Scripture which have commonly been regarded as strong indications of a future state: but in the corresponding portions of the history of Josephus, we find that no language of similar import is employed. Thus, Gen. ii. 7. we are

^u See note 1, page 225.

told that, at the creation of man, God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” This, as it relates a striking difference in the creation of man from what had been recorded with regard to other animals, is frequently insisted upon as an evidence that man, in distinction from other inferior creatures, was created with a view to perpetuity of existence^x. But no inference of this kind could possibly be drawn from any thing which has been said by the Jewish historian in relation to the same fact: for he simply records that God “infused into man breath and a soul.” We have ourselves alleged the language of Balaam, when he wishes to die the death of the righteous, and also the Mo-saical law against necromancy, as passages in which a future state is plainly recognised: but in regard to both these particulars the history of Josephus is wholly silent. The interview of Saul with the woman of Endor is indeed recorded: and this I believe will be found to be the only instance in the progress of his history which affords the slightest evidence either of the doctrine itself, or of its reception among his countrymen, till he comes to record the dream of Glaphyra^z: in which passage the apparition of Glaphyra’s former husband is strongly insisted on by him as evidence of the immortality of the soul. Thus have we a copious history of the same people whose history is recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which, from the creation of the world down to a few years after the commencement of the Christian era, (for that is the date of the event relating to Glaphyra,) only one incident is recorded which affords the slightest indication of a future state: and this history, the production of a person who fully believed that doctrine himself, and likewise declares it to have been believed, during every period of their existence as a nation, by the people who form the subject of his work.

287. 24.

Of Odin, the lawgiver of the Suevi, the same is recorded.] “After he had finished these glorious achieve-

^x “Moses eam [sc. animarum immortalitatis doctrinam] e fundo eruit, quum animam Dei imaginem, vel potius ad Dei imaginem factam, hominique secus ac cæteris animantibus insufflatam docuit. Eusebius: ὁ μὲν γὰρ Μωϋσῆς πρῶτος ἀθανάτων οὐσίαν εἶναι τὴν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ ψυχὴν ωρίσαστο, εἰκόνα φησὶς ὑπαρχεῖν αὐτὴν Θεοῦ.” Witsii *Ægyptiaca*, II. xv. 4.

^y Πνεῦμα ἐνεγκεν αὐτῷ καὶ ψυχὴν.

^z Ant. Jud. XVII. xiii. 4, 5.

“ments, Odin retired into Sweden; where, perceiving his
 “end to draw near, he would not wait till the conse-
 “quences of a lingering disease should put a period to
 “that life which he had so often bravely hazarded in the
 “field; but assembling the friends and companions of his
 “fortune, he gave himself nine wounds in the form of a
 “circle with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in
 “his skin with his sword. As he was dying, he declared
 “he was going back into Scythia to take his seat among
 “the other gods at an eternal banquet, where he would
 “receive with great honours all who should expose them-
 “selves intrepidly in battle, and die bravely with their
 “swords in their hands.” Mallet’s Northern Antiquities,
 pp. 66, 67.

291. 12.

I say then, in the words of bishop Bull, &c.] On the discourse from which these words are taken, Warburton has founded a most unwarrantable charge of inconsistency against this learned and venerable prelate. The state of the case is as follows. In a passage which, in a former part of this work^a, we extracted from the *Harmonia Apostolica*, the author of that treatise expressly declares *that no promise of a future state is to be found in the Law of Moses*. In the sermon here quoted, he argues, “That good men, even under the Law, or Old Testament, looked beyond this present vain transitory life, and believed and hoped for an everlasting happiness in the life to come.” Surely no inconsistency can here be discovered; unless with unjustifiable temerity and precipitation of reasoning we infer, with Warburton, that because Moses employed not the sanction, therefore the Israelites were necessarily ignorant of the doctrine. But the memory of that great divine will be most effectually cleared of this imputation, if we subjoin another extract from the same sermon. After adducing arguments in proof of the proposition stated above, he thus proceeds: “By these testimonies and instances it sufficiently appears, that good men under the Law did not live and die like swine, feeding only on the husks of these earthly vanities, as some have foolishly imagined. They had undoubtedly a future state in their eye, and lived by the faith of it, as well as we. This faith was first derived, *not from the Law of Moses*,

^a P. 26.

“ (for that in the letter of it promised nothing beyond this life,) but from the gracious revelation of God to mankind from the beginning.”

We cannot but lament that the writer of the Divine Legation should have so far forgotten the respect due to learning and virtue, as to have framed his very groundless accusation against this distinguished prelate in a manner which conveys an impeachment of his moral character. “ I should not,” says he, “ have illustrated this censure by the example of so respectable a person, but for the indiscretion of my answerers, who, to support their own ill logic, have exposed his *morals*^b.”

293. 20.

On this fact, and on these words, it is hardly necessary to offer any other comment than that which is supplied by Warburton himself.] But this comment, however natural, was not intended by that great writer to have any such application. The words quoted in the text relate to a passage in the Laws of Zaleucus, “ where wicked men are bid to set before themselves the dreadful hour of death.” On this occasion, Warburton justly remarks on the affectation of those who pretend that they cannot find the doctrine of a future state in these words^c. How strange then that he cannot himself find that doctrine in the wish of Balaam *to die the death of the righteous*! But we shall meet with something still more strange when we advert to the ground on which the inference, thus insisted on as good and valid in the case of Zaleucus, is rejected as good for nothing at all in the case of Balaam. Having observed that the words of Balaam are “ understood as a wish that he might be partaker with the righteous in another life,” he thus proceeds: “ Had the apostate prophet said, *Let me live the life of the righteous*, it would have had a much fairer claim for such a meaning.” What a strange expression of contempt for an opinion in which he had previously expressed his own concurrence, and in relation to which he had censured the affectation of those who pretended that they did not agree with him! He goes on: “ As it is, both the force of the words, and their relation to the context, restrain us to this literal meaning,—‘ Let me die in a mature old age, after a life of health and

^b Div. Leg. Note [A] on book vi. p. 445. vol. v.

^c See Div. Leg. b. ii. §. 3. and note [C] at the end of the section, vol. i.

“ peace, with all my posterity flourishing about me: as “ was the lot of the righteous observers of the LAW^d. ” The Law! What Law? Surely the style of expression will not allow us to understand here any other law than that which is preeminently so called, namely, the Law of Moses. What then had Balaam to do with that Law, with its peculiar sanctions, or with the lot of its righteous observers, when he was in no way bound to the observance of it himself?

It is true that Warburton contends for the prevalence of an equal or extraordinary providence (still confusing the ideas of two things of which the one is essentially inconsistent with each other: for, as we have shewn, an extraordinary providence must in its own nature be unequal) not only among the chosen seed of Jacob under the Mosaic Law, but also universally among all mankind during the earlier ages of the world. But this cannot be alleged in vindication of his consistency with regard to the passages we have been considering. For on his own view it will appear, that this extraordinary providence, if it ever existed, was extinct before the time of Balaam, and therefore could not have been in his contemplation when he spoke these words. The following extracts from the ninth book of his work will prove the truth of the foregoing statement, and will moreover furnish a full exposition of his views respecting the providential government of the world in those early ages.

“ At what time soever God’s providence hath been dispensed *equally* to the sons of Adam, living under the “ direction of natural law, they could expect their reward “ only *here*. But, whenever they began to observe that “ God’s providence was grown *unequal*, and that rewards “ and punishments were not regularly dispensed *here*, they “ would look to have the disorder rectified *hereafter*. ”

“ But that *distribution* of reward and punishment, which “ God, under every mode of his moral government, makes, “ with supreme justice, either here in this world, or here- “ after in another, was, (when the sentence of *death* was “ denounced on man’s transgression) at first made here in “ this world, so long as he continued to be favoured with “ the administration of an equal or extraordinary providence. Which, AS WE LEARN FROM THE MOSAIC HISTORY,” (where?) “ continued from the fall down to the

^d Div. Leg. b. vi. §. 3. p. 399. vol. v. ^e Ibid. b. ix. c. 1. p. 250. vol. vi.

“time when polytheism universally prevailed. For, when
“the world, by reason of the vices and corruptions of its
“inhabitants, did not like to retain God in their know-
“ledge, but changed the glory of the incorruptible God
“into an image made like to corruptible man^f, that first
“dispensation of Providence was withdrawn.”

“Yet, as soon as God had selected a chosen race, and
“had separated it from the rest of mankind, to place his
“name there, we see with astonishment this equal provi-
“dence revive in Judea; for man was still under the curse
“or doom of death. And this existed till repeated idola-
“tries, the crime which first caused the equal providence
“to be withdrawn from the nations at large, did at length
“deprive the chosen people likewise of their share of this
“blessings.”

From the foregoing passages it is apparent, that, though we were to admit the doctrine of the early and extraordinary providence which is therein contended for, such a state of things could not have been in the contemplation of Balaam when he wished to die the death of the righteous; since it is acknowledged, that such providence, if it ever existed, was then extinct.

As I have been led to the citation of the above passages, it would be improper to dismiss them without some further remark, in addition to that for the sake of which they were adduced.

It is here said, that an equal or extraordinary providence continued in the world from the fall down to the time when polytheism universally prevailed; or, as we find it otherwise expressed, while the world retained the memory of the true God^h. As the period is not precisely defined, it may be requisite for the purpose of argument that its limits should be more exactly fixed. If we suppose then that the equal providence here spoken of must have ceased before the call of Abraham, we shall hardly be accused of any injustice to the meaning of the writer. The authority of Moses is then alleged, as proof of the existence of this equal and extraordinary providence during a period, which cannot come down later than the call of Abraham. But where do the writings of Moses give the least support to such a position? So far are they indeed from affording it the slightest countenance, that, in fact, they furnish the

^f Rom. i. 23—28.

^g Div. Leg. b. ix. c. 1. p. 266. vol. vi.

^h See the following page of the Div. Leg.

most decided evidence to the contrary. For during the abovementioned period, there are only three persons of eminent piety of whom the scripture has given us any record, Abel, Enoch, and Noah : with respect to all of whom it is certain that they were not properly speaking the subjects of such a distribution. The first was taken off by a premature death, as the very consequence of his piety : the second had his reward, but it was eternal and not temporal : the third can have enjoyed no large measure of temporal felicity, living as he did at a time when all flesh had corrupted its way before God, and when the wide spread wickedness of those around him was wholly incompatible with that happiness which man as a social being is framed to enjoy.

307. 1.

(1) A promise relating to the effect of prayer is contained 2 Chron. vii. 12, 13, 14. where God appears to Solomon after the dedication of the temple. But even here it is remarkable, that the promise is not general. For first, it is confined to prayers offered up in one particular place, namely, the temple. Secondly, it is confined to those prayers in which temporal blessings are the matter of the petition.

THE END.

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The Rev. **THOS. MORTIMER**, A.M. Minister of St. Mark's, Clerkenwell, Afternoon Lecturer of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, thus wrote to the Editor in the course of the work:

"Dear Sir,—Having at length been able to devote a little time to the perusal of your Cottage Bible, I cannot refrain from expressing my approbation of the candour, the moderation, and Christian spirit, which appear to pervade the whole."

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"I fully concur with Mr. Jay in the recommendation of this work."

From the Rev. W. MANUEL, D.D. late Minister of the Scotch Church, London Wall:

"My perusal of the first six Nos. of 'The Cottage Bible' enables me to add to the many high recommendations that have already been given of it, my humble, but strong conviction, that it will be an able and a useful work," &c.

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"I assure you that having now perused the whole Commentary, my opinion has not been lessened as to its merits, but highly increased; and . . . I consider it a most valuable acquisition to my library."

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From the Rev. JOS. FLETCHER, M.A. Stepney; Author of "Lectures on the Roman Catholic Religion."

"Dear Sir,—Allow me to thank you for the specimen of 'The Cottage Bible,' I think very highly of the plan and its execution, and shall be very happy to do all in my power to promote its circulation."

Similar Letters have also been received from the Rev. Dr. MORRISON, President of the Anglo-Chinese College, Malacca, late in England; from the Rev. J. BLACKBURN, Pentonville; Rev. JN. GRIFFIN, Portsea; Rev. R. NEWMAN, M.A. Ebley; Rev. W. ROBY, Manchester; Rev. Dr. COPE, Wakefield; Rev. W. COOPER, Sen. Dublin; and many others.

The Rev. T. H. HORNE, M.A. in the 6th edition of his admirable "Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures," (vol. ii. p. 773) calls this work an "unassuming, but highly useful, as well as cheap Commentary on the Holy Scriptures."

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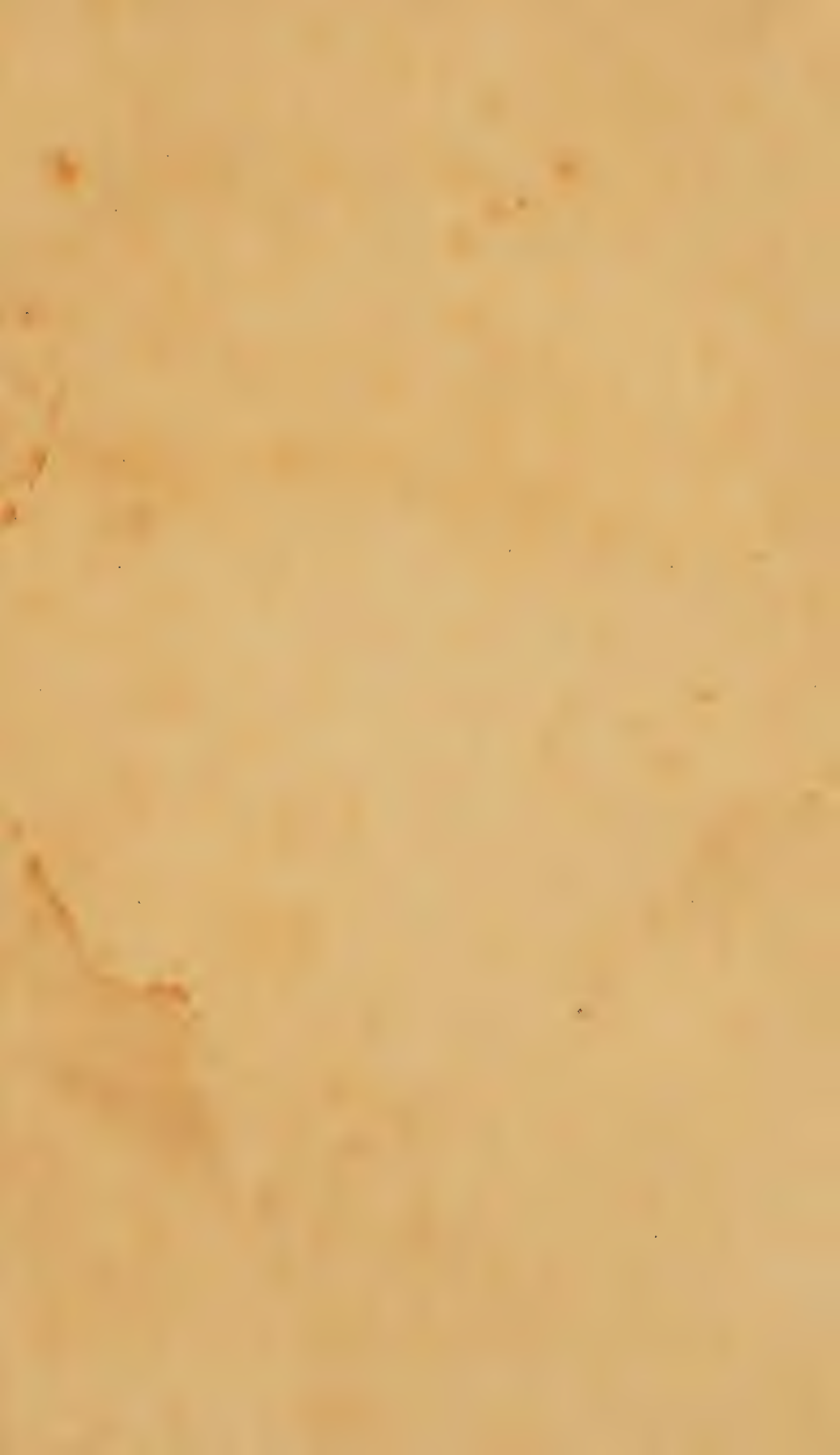
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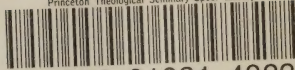
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